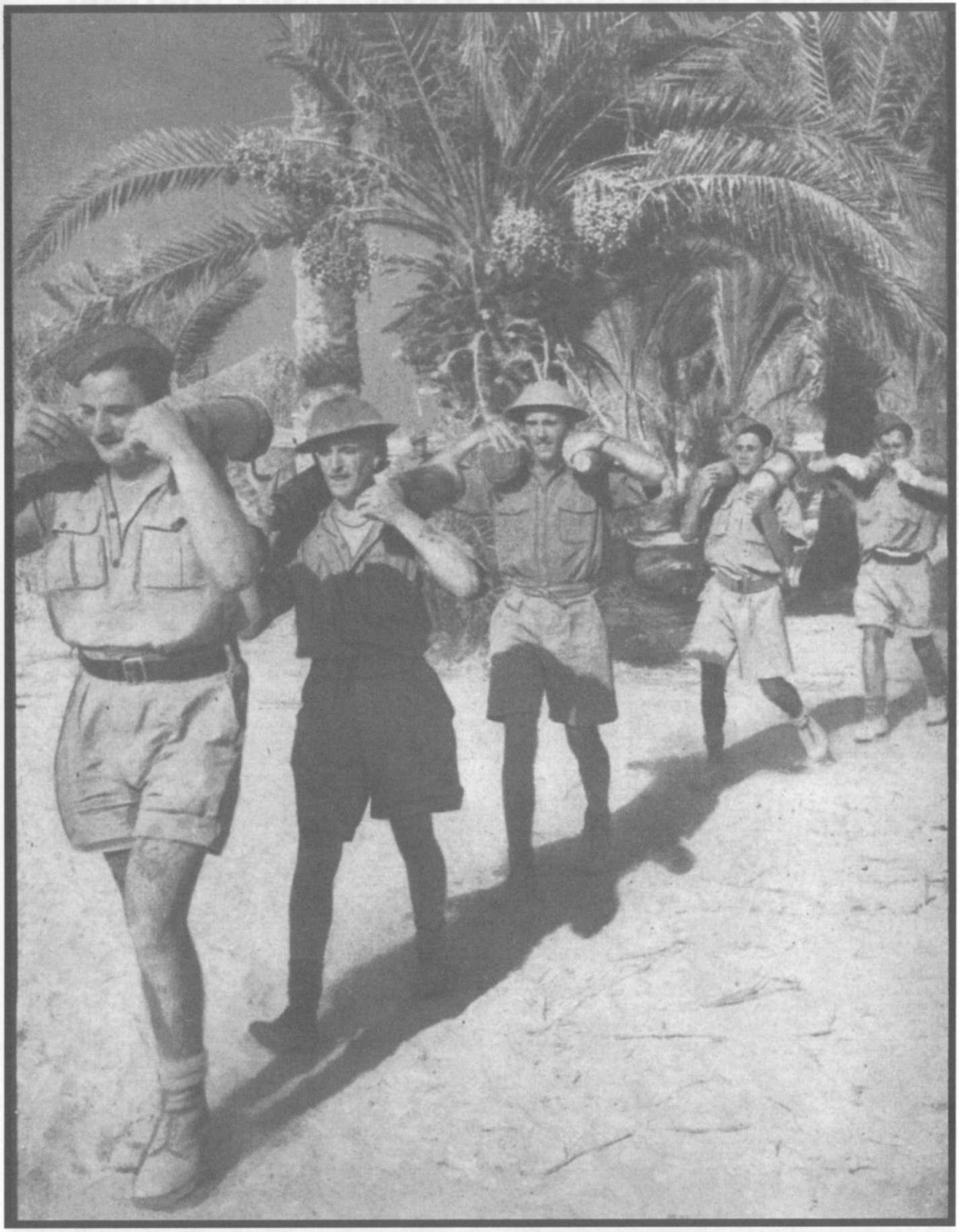


SHELLS FOR THE GUNS THAT BATTERED GRAZIANI

Through a truly tropical scene these gunners of a British field artillery unit are man-handling shells for their guns emplaced somewhere in the Western Desert. In large measure General Wavell's smashing victory over the Italian invaders was due to the accurate and long-sustained shooting of the artillery arm of the Imperial Army of the Nile.

Photo, British Official : Crown Copyright

This Is How They Stormed Sidi Barrani

Most important of the actions which opened General Wavell's great offensive against the Italians in the Western Desert of Egypt was the capture of Sidi Barrani, Graziani's advanced supply base. Some account of the battle has been given in an earlier page (see page 674), but we are now in a position to provide a much more detailed and comprehensive narrative.

At dawn on Monday, December 9, the Italians holding the desert fort of Nibeiwa, some 15 miles to the south of Sidi Barrani, heard some shots which were returned by their patrols. The firing soon died down and the garrison went on with the preparations for breakfast. But while they were consuming their coffee and rolls they heard again the crackle of rifle-fire and, much more ominous, a heavy rumbling. Rushing to the walls, they were amazed to see advancing towards them across the desert numbers of British and Indian troops, supported by tanks. At the same time the British artillery opened up, and while a barrage of 60 lb. shells was dropping on the Italian fortifications facing the east, tanks, field guns, and lorries filled with infantry swept up from the west, where no attack had been expected. In confusion the Italians turned some of their guns round and fired furiously at the attackers. But the British tanks were already charging up the embankment, their guns spouting death, while a hail of shells fell on the fort from the guns established way back in the desert. Then the infantry were unloaded from their lorries, fixed bayonets, and prepared to charge. The Italian tanks were never got into action because their crews, caught in their tents by the cannonade, were unable to penetrate the curtain of fire. Then the horses and mules were so terrified by the noise that they stampeded, adding to the confusion that prevailed within the compound. Still the British tanks came on: they breached the walls and drove here and there amongst the medley of men and animals. Behind them rushed the British and Indian infantry, shooting, thrusting, stabbing with their bayonets.

BATTLE OF SIDI BARRANI. Based on the details of the fighting which have come to hand, this map shows the approximate course of the three days' operations which ended on December 11 with the capture of Sidi Barrani by the Imperial Army of the Nile.

Once the attackers were inside the fort the Italians had no protection beyond their tents and a few dug-outs and trenches which had been constructed against air raids. "Many jumped into refuge trenches," said an Italian surgeon afterwards. "They did not know it, but they were jumping into their own graves because the shells came pouring into the trench after them. Shrapnel hit a medicine chest, and when a barrel of creosote burst the men thought it was poison gas."

Another Italian officer described the attack as being "the nearest thing to hell ever seen on this earth;" Colonel Giusfreda, Chief of Staff to General Maletti, Commander of an Italian armoured column, who was amongst the slain, told the British officer who took him prisoner that "the action was brilliantly conceived and even more brilliantly executed. We were taken completely by surprise." By 8 o'clock all resistance had ceased, and Nibeiwa was in British hands (see page 723).

As soon as Nibeiwa had been captured the British forces re-formed behind the shattered walls and moved to attack the Tummar group of forts, which lay to the north between Nibeiwa and Sidi Barrani. These, too, fell in the course of that first day of battle. Meanwhile, a British armoured column hurried across the desert, and in the space of a few hours reached Buqbuq on the coast, thus cutting the road between Sidi Barrani and Sollum. Their advance was furthered by a tremendous bombardment from ships of the British Mediterranean Fleet, which moved up and down the coast shelling the Italian positions and columns of motor transport.

On board the ships the course of the battle was followed over the wireless, and one who was there said it was like listening to an intensely exciting B.B.C. sports commentary. One of the messages overheard came from the commander of a British tank who said, "I am stopped in the middle of 200 men—no, 500 men—with their hands up. For heaven's sake send up the blankety blank infantry." Another ran, "I am two miles south of the first Buq in Buqbuq." This place, known to every British soldier as Bugbug, was captured on December 10 by the Armoured Brigade, which took 14,000 prisoners—so many that they sent out an S O S for the infantry, saying that they were anxious to continue their advance without having to bother about acting as

ANTI-TANK GUNS mounted in the Western Desert in readiness for the assault by Graziani's tanks. In the event, however, the Italian tank arm was handled very ineffectively, and scores of tanks were amongst the huge booty captured by the Army of the Nile.
Photo, British Official: Crown Copyright

Dry and Barren Was the Field of Combat

WATER is a major problem both for Wavell and for Graziani. Wells are few and far between in the Western Desert, and the precious fluid has to be brought by lorry and stored in tanks sunk deep in the sand.

GUNS OF THE ROYAL ARTILLERY preparing the way for the British advance against the Italian forts on the Libyan frontier are covered with thin rope netting, which, seen from an angle, blends perfectly with the sand. In the desert camouflage is all the more necessary as natural cover is so slight. Inset, a British soldier is using a bomb crater as protection while he explodes a land-mine left by the retreating enemy.

Photos. British Official: Crown Copyright

Australians On the Way to Meet the Italians

AUSTRALIANS, just detrained at the railhead at Mersa Matruh, are setting off to "footslog" through a fog of penetrating and choking dust. It was with boundless pride that the news was received "down under" of the part played by the "Aussies" in their first major action.

Photo, Australian Official

warders. Soon a battalion of Indian infantry took charge of the prisoners, and the Armoured Brigade continued its pursuit of the Italians along the road to Sollum, at the same time cutting off those columns of Italian troops who were painfully making their way to the coast from their positions in the desert.

Meanwhile, the British columns had been drawing near to Sidi Barrani, as one by one the forts surrounding it were overrun. Nibeiwa, as we have seen, was the first to fall on the morning of December 9; shortly afterwards Maktila, 15 miles to the east along the coast, was also carried. Here it was that the Libyan troops were so terrified by the noise of the 15-inch guns used by the Fleet in their bombardment of the place that they deserted their Italian officers and fled along the road to Sidi Barrani. Many of them were intercepted by the British tanks and wiped out, but the remainder staggered into Sidi Barrani, where they were flung into the firing-line alongside a crack division of Blackshirts.

By nightfall on that same Monday Tummar East and Tummar West, two camps just north of Nibeiwa, were both in British hands, and on Wednesday, December 11, Habsa or Point 90 also capitulated. On the same day the Italian commander at Sofafa, where a division was holding an exceedingly strong group of four forts, was tricked into disaster. For three days the British forces had been detailed to stand by, not attacking but simply keeping a watchful eye on his movements. News of the reverse which his colleagues had suffered was allowed to trickle through, with the result that by the Wednesday morning the Italian had taken the decision to evacuate. At breakfast-time hundreds of lorries and large numbers of men, including part of the 63rd Metropolitan Division and some Blackshirts, set out from the encampment and started to creep westwards along the desert. This was the moment the R.A.F. had been waiting for. They dive-bombed and machine-gunned the marchers, and when the column was last seen it was marching straight into a British tank unit which had been detailed to intercept it.

Now the way was clear to the final assault on Sidi Barrani, which already had been heavily bombed and bombarded from land, sea and air. It was held by Blackshirt regiments under General Gallina, in command of the 23rd Corps, and it was now attacked by a British brigade of the Indian division which had just stormed the Tummar camps, assisted by an armoured brigade which was operating eastwards from Buqbuq. On the night of December 10 they bivouacked in the desert, then at dawn the long columns of lorries continued their march across the plain. Soon the enemy positions came in sight, and at a distance of about 3,000 yards the British came under a heavy fire. The lorries were taken up a little farther, however, before the infantry "debused." Then the men went into the attack—on the left wing a famous South Country regiment, Highland troops in the centre, and a Midland regiment on the right. The Italians were holding a strongly-entrenched position, protected by many well-sited machine-guns. Throughout the battle a sandstorm was raging—"hellish" is the word used by a major to describe it. "The Blackshirts," he went on, "stuck to their guns surprisingly well. It was extremely hard to see them in their trenches among the sand dunes, and there were plenty of them." As the infantry were held up by a withering fire the call went forth for artillery and tanks.

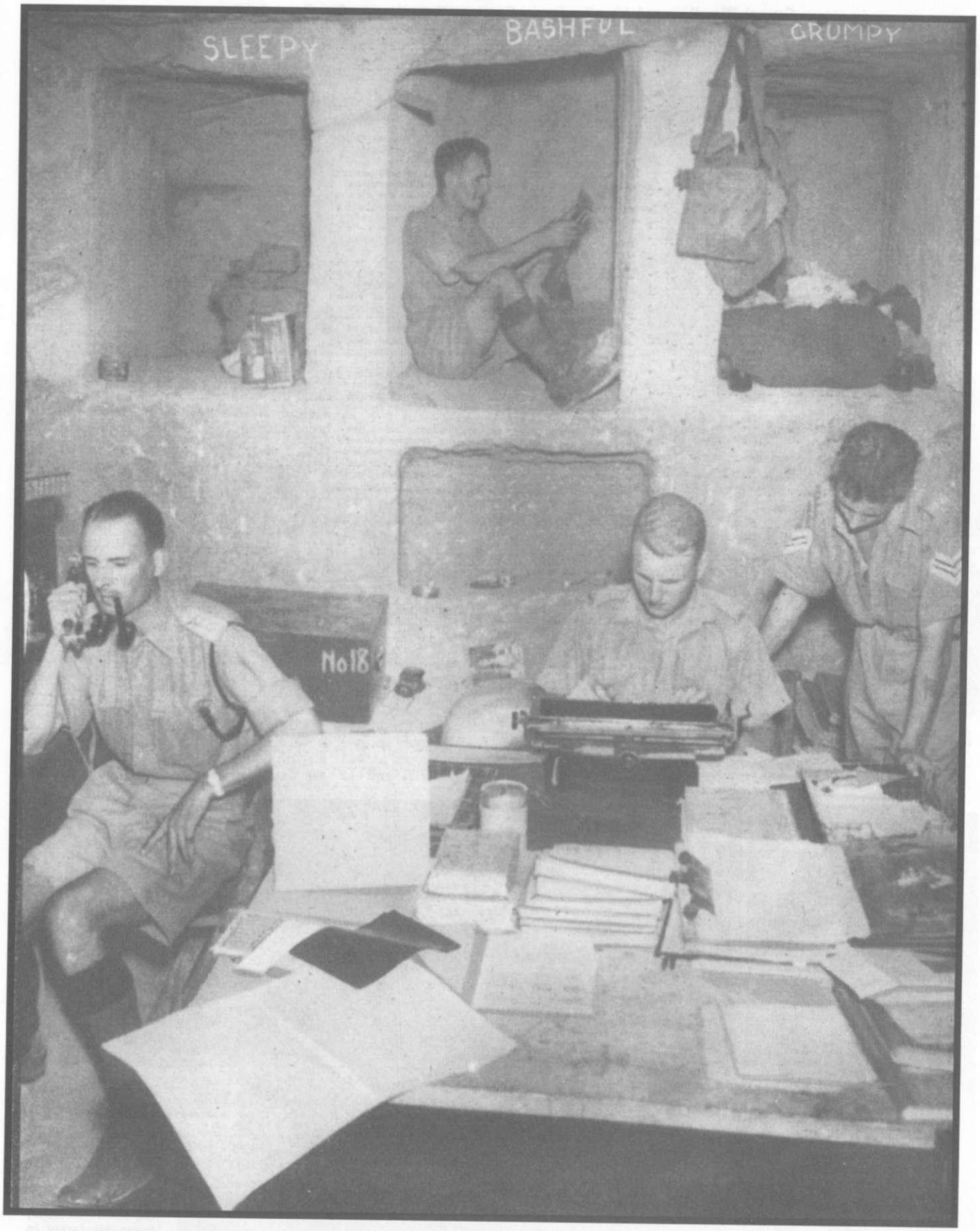
Charge of the Highlanders

So there came rumbling into action a squadron of the most modern British battle-tanks. They smashed their way through on the left flank, enabling the South Country regiment to carry the positions opposite them by storm. The artillery cleared the way for the Midlanders on the right flank, so that they, too, were able to make some progress. But the centre was still held up, and at last the Brigadier, hearing of the successes on either flank, gave the order to advance. With fixed bayonets the Highlanders then charged across the desert through a hail of bullets, and in a few minutes were amongst the Blackshirts with their bayonets. By 2 o'clock the Scots had gained a foothold on a low ridge looking down on Sidi Barrani with the Mediterranean and British ships beyond.

Meanwhile, the tanks on the British left wing had nosed their way along the shore, and British forces were drawing near from Maktila, driving a host of fugitives before them. About 3 o'clock in the afternoon the Highlanders holding the ridge attacked again. Racing down over the scrubby slopes, they charged into the ruins of Sidi Barrani. For a short time there was fierce hand-to-hand fighting; then group after group of the defenders held up their hands, waving handkerchiefs and shirts and crying "Ci rendiamo"—we surrender. Some of the Blackshirts tried to escape along the road to the west, but when they came up against the British armoured brigade they, too, surrendered. The number of prisoners taken was stated to be in the neighbourhood of 15,000, but they were pouring in so rapidly that it was impossible to keep an accurate check; nor was it possible to make an inventory of the quantities of war supplies of every kind which fell to the conquerors.

On the day following the battle General Gallina, who was taken prisoner together with several of his divisional generals, asked and was granted permission to address his troops; he thanked them for having fought like good Fascists. The British, too, were loud in their praises of the enemy. "The Italians fought bravely," said one British major, "you can take my word for that."

At Battalion H.Q. They Waited for Zero Hour



IN THE WESTERN DESERT the Battalion Headquarters of one of the regiments with the Army of the Nile were established in an old Roman tomb, a relic of the days when Egypt was a province of the Roman Empire. Telephones and typewriters were installed, while the niches where the coffins of the Roman dead once lay served as bunks for the officers. To give a last touch of modernity to the scene these were named after the dwarfs who divide their fame with "Snow White."

Photo, British Official: Crown Copyright

The Invader Invaded: the War in Libya

General Wavell opened his offensive in Egypt on December 9. Sidi Barrani fell on December 11, and before the week was out the Italians had been driven out of Egypt and the Imperial Army of the Nile had followed the defeated, dispirited and, in part at least, demoralized enemy over the frontier into Libya.

WHILE one part of Wavell's Army of the Nile surrounded Sidi Barrani and after storming its ring of forts captured the place—or what was left of it—on December 11, other large detachments raced westwards in pursuit of the fleeing enemy. One armoured brigade made for Buqbuq, main centre for the distribution of food and water to Graziani's advance troops. For a day they were held up south-east of the village; then on the afternoon of December 10 they carried it by assault. Many thousands of prisoners were taken, but a considerable number of Italian troops escaped and made for Sollum, some 30 miles to the west. They were closely followed by the British as they hurried along the coastal road, and on their way they were harried, too, by bombers of the R.A.F. and by ships of the Mediterranean Fleet lying off the shore.

With a view to heading off the fugitives, one of the British armoured columns swept around west of Buqbuq and flung itself astride the road to Sollum. Hardly had they done so when they saw coming towards them a whole division of Italian regulars—the 64th (Catanzaro) division under General Amico. The Italians were taken completely by surprise when they marched into the ambush of British tanks and armoured cars. So surprised, indeed, were they that they showed little fight, and practically all of the 14,000 men composing the division were captured, together with vast quantities of war material which they left strewn along both sides of the road. An infantry brigade having come up took charge of the prisoners and marched them away down "Victory Avenue," as the Italians had named the road between Sollum and Sidi Barrani. But theirs was no victory march—just two long columns of dusty and tired conscripts, every 200 or 300 being guarded by a single cheerfully grinning Cockney private.

Through storms of dust and rain the British tanks and armoured cars poured across the desert towards Sollum, and the weather had cleared somewhat when on the morning of December 16 the attack was launched on this, Mussolini's last stronghold in Egypt. The walls having been breached by artillery fire, the tanks charged into the village, closely followed by the infantry. Some of the defenders slipped away along the road to the west, but the great majority—so many that it was difficult to count them—fell into the hands of the conquerors, as well as huge masses of war material and 15 Italian 'planes which had already been rendered unserviceable by British air attacks earlier in the week. Those Italians who had escaped retreated up Halfiya Pass—Hell Fire Pass, the British called it. From machine-gun positions skilfully sited in the side of the escarpment the Italians poured a withering fire on to our mechanized units as they forced their way up. But nothing could stop the advance. The Italians fled in disorder, and soon the British tanks were crunching through the wire which marked the boundary between Egypt and Libya.

First news of the British invasion of Libya was contained in an Italian communiqué issued on Dec. 15 which referred to "bloody encounters in the desert zone of Fort Capuzzo, Sollum and Bardia." Fort Capuzzo was stormed the next day; then came the news that three forts to the south, Musaid, Sidi Omar and Shefferzen, had also been carried by another of the British armoured columns. This was on Tuesday, December 17. Still farther to the south Australian cavalry charged, sword in hand, the Italians holding the oasis of Jarabub and carried the place by assault.

Fresh from these victories the Imperial Army—British and Indians, Australians and New Zealanders, with their Free French and Polish allies—continued their march into Libya, the tanks and armoured cars closely followed by battalions of infantry conveyed in lorries. Some of the invaders moved straight on Bardia, Mussolini's big base and port 12 miles inside Libyan territory, and soon it was cut off. Others drove across the desert and reached the coast 20 miles beyond Bardia and some 30 miles inside Libya.

Bardia itself was now a blazing inferno, as it was shelled from the land, bombed from the air and bombarded from the sea. The night sky was lit up with the pin-points of bursting

ON THE EVE OF THE BATTLE

General Wavell's Order of the Day to the Troops in the Western Desert

THE result of the fighting in the Western Desert will be one of the decisive events of the war.

The crushing defeat of the Italian forces will have an incalculable effect not only upon the whole position in the Middle East, not only upon the military situation everywhere, but on the future of freedom and civilization throughout the world. It may shorten the war by very many months.

It must be the firm determination of every man to do everything that in him lies, without thought of self, to win this decisive victory.

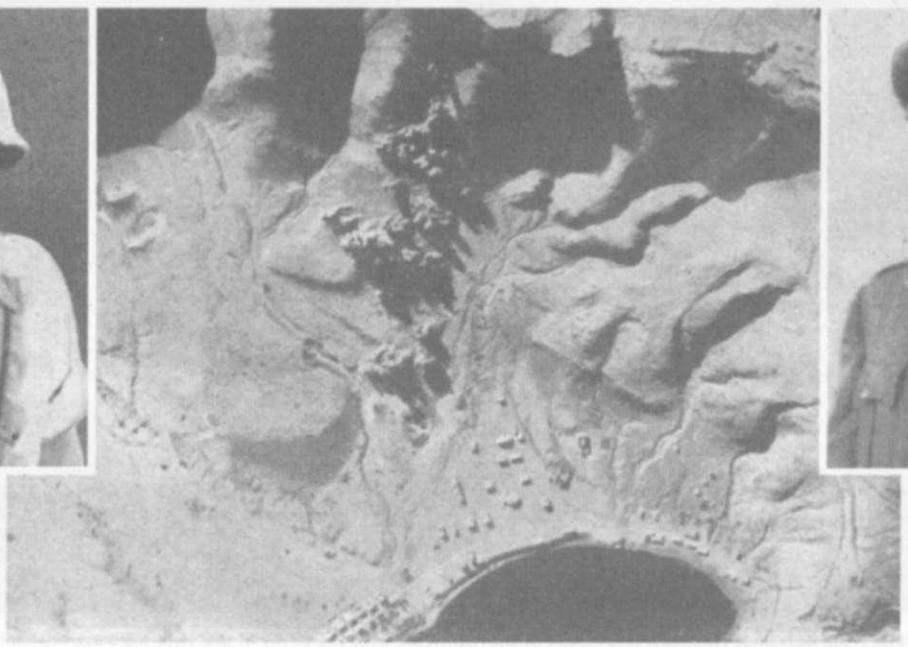
In everything but numbers we are superior to the enemy. We are more highly trained, we shoot straighter, we have better equipment. Above all, we have stouter hearts, greater traditions, and we are fighting for a worthier cause.

The Italians entered the war treacherously, without a reason, because they expected a cheap and easy victory. Let us show them their mistake by inflicting on them a stern and costly defeat.

Mr. Winston Churchill has sent us every wish for good fortune in this fighting, and his assurance that all the acts, decisions, valour, and violence against the enemy will, whatever their upshot, receive the resolute support of his Majesty's Government.

We have waited long in the Middle East; when our chance comes let us strike hard. The harder the blows we strike against these servants of tyranny and selfish lust for power, the sooner we shall bring peace and freedom back into the world and be able to return to our own free, peaceful homes.

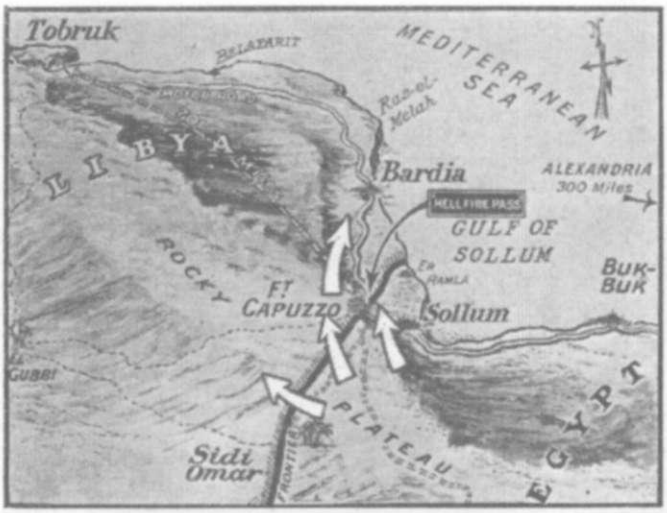
MAJ.-GEN. R. N. O'CONNOR, who is in direct command of the Imperial Army in the Western Desert, served with distinction in the last war. Besides the D.S.O. with bar and the M.C. he was awarded the Italian Silver Medal for Valour.



SOLLUM, seen from the air in this unique photograph, was retaken by the British on December 16, 1940, after being in Italian hands since the beginning of the previous September. In the meantime it had been heavily fortified by Graziani, and on the foreshore and in the gully leading to it military buildings can be discerned. *Photos, Central Press, "Daily Mirror" and E.N.A.*

MAJOR-GENERAL M. O'MOORE CREAGH, who was in command of the Armoured Division that dashed along the coast into Libya, began his career in the Army as a cavalryman, but soon applied cavalry tactics to mechanized units.

Sollum and Fort Capuzzo Fall to the British



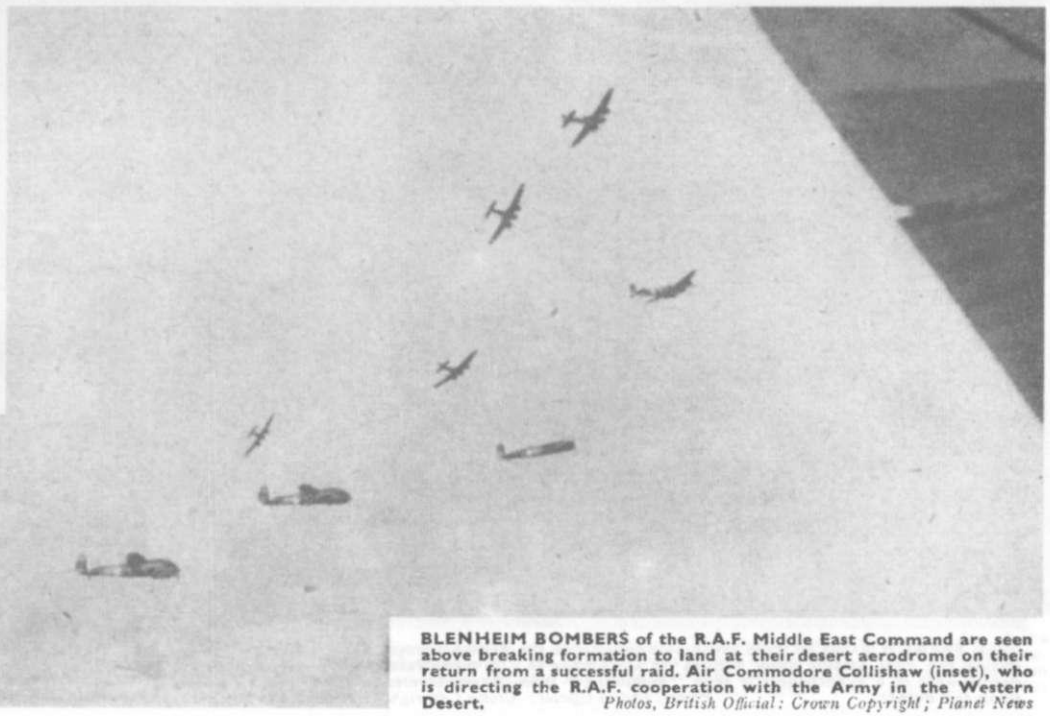
FORT CAPUZZO AND SOLLUM fell on December 16, and at once the British forces moved on against Bardia, twelve miles into Libya. The white arrows in the map above show the general direction of the British advance. On the right is the port of Bardia, so mercilessly hammered by the R.A.F. *Photo, E.N.A., map by courtesy of the "Daily Telegraph"*

A.A. shells and great strings of "flaming-onions"; flares floodlit the landscape, and huge columns of smoke floated upwards and blotted out the stars. The place was strongly held, for within its walls were bottled up the whole of the 62nd division under General Berti, together with what was left of the 63rd division and some of the Blackshirts who had managed to escape from Sidi Barrani. They put up a strong resistance but, surrounded on every side, their surrender was deemed to be merely a matter of time.

By now even the Italians at home were allowed to know something—but only something—of the disaster which had befallen their arms in Africa. Writing his weekly screed, Gayda, Mussolini's mouthpiece, declared that the British had concentrated 300,000 men in Egypt and that 800 tanks and armoured cars supported their advance; and an announcer over the Rome radio declared that the British were using a tank of a new model, much more powerful and better protected than the earlier types.

In the House of Commons on December 19 Mr. Churchill reviewed this "memorable battle," as he well styled it, "spread over this vast expanse of desert with swiftly-moving mechanized columns circling in and out of the mass and posts of the enemy, and with fighting taking place over an area as large as Yorkshire." The figure of 30,000 prisoners taken was, he said, a considerable understatement, and to them should be added a hundred serviceable guns and 50 tanks, together with a great quantity of invaluable stores. Yet the Army of the Nile, after continuous fighting throughout the week, had lost less than a thousand killed and wounded of all ranks, British, Indian and Imperial troops.

MARSHAL GRAZIANI, C.-in-C. of the Italian armies in North Africa, partaking of a meal in the desert. He is a hard-bitten old warrior, with an unenviable reputation for harshness towards the natives. *Photo, G.P.U.*



BLENHEIM BOMBERS of the R.A.F. Middle East Command are seen above breaking formation to land at their desert aerodrome on their return from a successful raid. Air Commodore Collishaw (inset), who is directing the R.A.F. cooperation with the Army in the Western Desert. *Photos, British Official: Crown Copyright; Planet News*

Poles and Free French Share in the Triumph

POLISH TROOPS cooperated with the British forces in the Western Desert, and a motorized Polish column is seen above. General Sir Archibald Wavell (circle), C.-in-C. of the Army of the Nile, talks to men of a Yorkshire regiment.

While Bardia was still holding out, Marshal Graziani sent a message to Mussolini, explaining the disaster which had befallen him. He reminded the Duce of the great difficulties which hampered his march into Egypt—the inadequate communications and the almost entire lack of water. By December preparations for a further advance were almost complete, but since early in October aerial reconnaissances revealed a British concentration east of Mersa Matruh, and so there was, Graziani declared, no surprise. The attack was launched on December 9. "Against the positions occupied by our troops in the flat desert territory the enemy poured masses of armoured cars, tanks, light and heavy arms, supported by mobile batteries and aerial forces. As soon as the terrific aerial bombardment ceased, armoured units advanced from all directions against our troops . . .

"Against the armoured mass operating concentrically over a wide front the opposition of our anti-tank guns and artillery, forced to disperse their fire on a number of very mobile objectives, was ineffectual. It is in the crushing superiority of the armoured units employed *en masse* that the reason for the enemy's initial success is to be found."

FREE FRENCH FORCES gave invaluable support to the British troops during the final assault upon Sollum on December 16. A motorized detachment of a French unit is seen "debussing" from Army lorries upon the desert.

Photos, British Official: Crown Copyright

'Mid Snow and Rain the Greeks Still Advanced

Though the weather conditions were appalling, the war between Greek and Italian in the Albanian mountains continued on its bloody way. Below we give a picture of the battle-front after fifty days of war, when the Italians were being relentlessly driven back on Valona.

AFTER fifty days of fighting the front formed by the opposing armies of Italians and Greeks ran in a jagged line across the mountains of south-central Albania. It was not a continuous line, for the character of the country, so rugged and barren, so precipitous in places, so reft by narrow gorges carved out of the rock by the rushing mountain streams, forbade anything in the nature of a connected system of strong points and trenches; but wherever the Greeks could secure a foothold they continued their advance against the Italians, who, for their part, were obliged to keep to the roads, for only along roads could their motorized transport move.

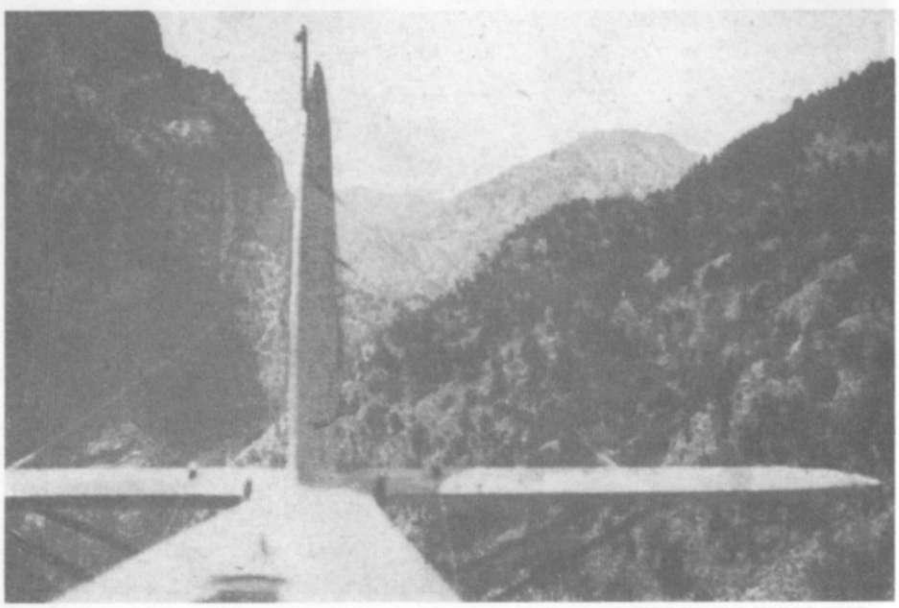
By the middle of December, then, the "line" ran from the shores of Lake Ochrida to the west of Pogradets, and thence across the mountains in a south-westerly direction to just south of Klisura, which already was under Greek fire and on the point of being abandoned by the Italians. Then, after dipping in the valley of the Viosa and up the opposite slope, it faced Tepelini, an Italian supply centre, which also was reported to have been abandoned. Between Tepelini and the coast the line ran across Mt. Skiovika. Here on the ridge the Italians had established themselves in strong positions, but on Dec. 16 the Greeks, fighting in a furious snowstorm, swept through the Italian defences and stormed one after the other the gun emplacements and machine-gun nests. The Italians made five attempts to recapture the hill, but the Greeks mowed them down until the slopes were a shambles. At last the Italians—men of the Alpini division—had had enough of this useless slaughter, and retired northwards in disorder. The Modena division, which counter-attacked in the west of the river Drinos, was also repulsed.

The "line" reached the sea in the neighbourhood of Porto Palermo, which on December 18 was the scene of the rout of the Italian Fourth Grenadiers, the King of Italy's personal bodyguard, by the Greeks, who charged them with the bayonet. A little to the north is Himara (Chimarà), which was also being bombarded. Indeed, it was rumoured that the Italians had abandoned it, though another report stated that they were dragging their heavy artillery up the mountains in a last desperate effort to save the place. For if Chimara, Tepelini and Klisura fell, then Valona itself could hardly be held; and Valona's harbour might provide a splendid base for the British Navy. Not without reason, then, did Mussolini order that big naval guns should be put into position on the little island of Saseno—the "Gibraltar of the Adriatic," as the Italians have called it—which lies at the entrance of the Bay of Valona.

Throughout these operations the weather was appalling. Mr. Arthur Merton, Special Correspondent of the "Daily Telegraph," telegraphed that thick clouds were overhanging the whole country, creating a most depressing atmosphere, and torrential rains were sweeping over the land, converting the roads into morasses of rising mud. Sleet and hail alternated with the rain, and the mountains were covered with thick snow. Water was pouring down the mountain-sides, converting streams into roaring torrents which swept away bridges in their onrush.

Yet nothing seemed to be able to deter the Greeks. On his way across the mountains Mr. Merton passed endless convoys carrying supplies to the front line. "Their covered wagons or open carts on which the drivers huddled under pieces of canvas, trying to protect themselves from the driving rain and wind, were drawn by sturdy little horses or mules. Cheerfulness was the characteristic of all these wayfarers. There were always greetings for us. Through thick, slippery

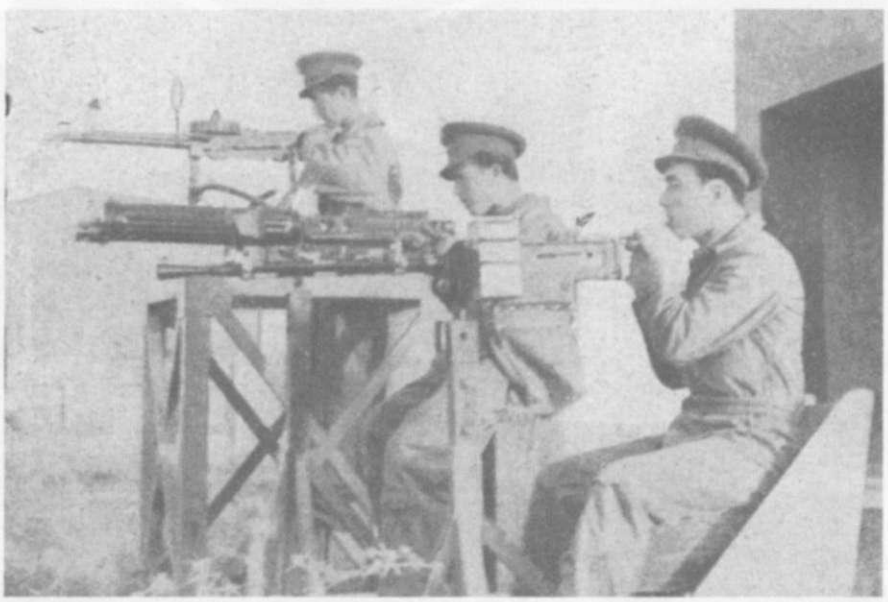
WAR COUNCIL IN ATHENS. Left to right: Major-General M. D. Gambier-Parry, Chief British Liaison Officer with the Greek Army; General Metaxas, Prime Minister of Greece; King George; Air Vice-Marshal J. H. D'Albiac, commanding the British forces in Greece; and General Papagos, Greek C.-in-C.



ALBANIA'S HILLS glimpsed from an R.A.F. 'plane. The photograph gives some idea of the nature of the country through which the Italians were forced to retreat. In narrow defiles beneath the precipitous mountain-side they had little chance of escaping the bombs that rained on them from the air. *Photos, British Official: Crown Copyright; and Fox*

Athens Was a City of Victory Smiles

ENTHUSIASM IN ATHENS grew steadily as the news of the Allied victories began to come through. Top, British sailors in the Greek capital are being received with hearty handclaps. In the lower photograph young Greek recruits crowd on to a tram to make a triumphant tour of Athens before joining their units.



THE GREEK AIR FORCE was small, but proved its worth against the Italians time and again. Young Greeks are keen to join it, and training is in full swing. Here recruits are learning to use the various types of guns mounted on the aircraft in which they will fly.

Photos, British Paramount Newsreel and Sport & General

mire which hindered every step, they ploughed their way." On a summit of some 6,000 feet, where conditions were truly Arctic, old men and women and even little children were picking up stone and slate from the hill-side and carrying it to the road to make it passable for wheeled transport. "Equally pathetic, but inspiring, was the sight of those thousands of horses and mules, drenched and shivering with cold, but struggling to bear the loads which are their contribution to their masters' success in the battle."

Very different was the spirit of the Italians, few of whom had any real interest in the struggle. In some places, it is true, they put up a fierce resistance, but in others they acted as if they were completely demoralized. Thus we are told of one village, Vassilikon in the Pindus sector, which was evacuated by the Italians without a shot being fired as soon as they heard that the Greeks were approaching. When the Greeks entered the place they found that the fires were still burning in the bakeries and bread ovens; in the houses and encampment water was still hot in the basins. Half-eaten meals lay on the tables, and in one officer's tent his clothes were laid out neatly on his camp bed; in another the soap was still wet on a shaving-brush. Some 1,500 bicycles were found in or about the village; apparently they had been brought up in readiness for the victory parade which the Italians had planned so confidently to hold in Janina.

Terrible Conditions at the Front

But, all the same, the Italians were still holding strong positions and were not only better equipped than the Greeks but probably more numerous. The Greeks profited by the enormous captures of Italian war material, and were as quick to use the Italian lorries as they were to turn round the Italian guns and tanks. But in the terrible weather conditions that prevailed on the mountain battlefield their plight was pitiable. Numbers of the men were without even a single blanket, as 200,000 blankets had been destroyed by a fire in Athens on the eve of the war; many more had to share a blanket with a comrade. Their boots, too, were in a shocking state after weeks of marching and clambering about the rocks. As one Greek corps commander put it, "If my men are able to do so much with so little essential clothing, how much more could be done if they were more adequately provided!"

Meanwhile, in spite of the opening of the offensive in Egypt, the R.A.F. and the Royal Navy continued their aid to our Greek allies. Air Vice-Marshal D'Albiac stated on December 21 that the strength of the R.A.F. in Greece was expected to be increased as soon as the weather improved, when large scale operations would begin. Since the beginning of the war, he added, 39 Italian 'planes had definitely been destroyed in the Balkans, while 12 others had probably been destroyed, as against only nine British 'planes lost. Valona had been raided 18 times and Durazzo eight times.

As for the Royal Navy, on December 18 ships of the Mediterranean Fleet swept the Adriatic Sea as far north as Bari and Durazzo, while a force of battleships, under the command of the C.-in-C., heavily bombarded Valona. No opposition was encountered from the enemy.

The Italians Were Also Driven Out of Gallabat

GALLABAT fell to the British on November 6, 1940, after an action lasting only about three-quarters of an hour; right, two British soldiers are seen inspecting the ruins of the fort just after the Italians had been forced to abandon it.

Artillery had shelled the fort heavily before the attack was made. Circle, is one of the guns in action during the bombardment. Aircraft, tanks, and armoured cars gave efficacious support to the British and Indian troops.

Photos, British Official: Crown Copyright

IN July 1940 the Italians claimed an "important success" when they advanced from Italian East Africa and captured Kassala and Gallabat, two fortified villages in the Sudan, just over the border from Abyssinia. The Italian triumph was short-lived, however, for on November 6 Gallabat was retaken by the British and was successfully held against the enemy. The photographs in this page are among the first to arrive in Britain showing scenes during and after the capture of the place. Meanwhile, patrol activity was marked in the vicinity of Kassala, and in Abyssinia itself the natives became more and more restive under the yoke of the Italian army of occupation.

ITALIAN PRISONERS taken when Gallabat was captured being marched away to internment (left); among them were 17 deserters, an early indication of the Italian lack of morale. Above, British troops in possession of the fort are watching for any sign of a counter-attack by the enemy. One was made, but was successfully repulsed.

Sudan's Defence Force Fights for the Empire

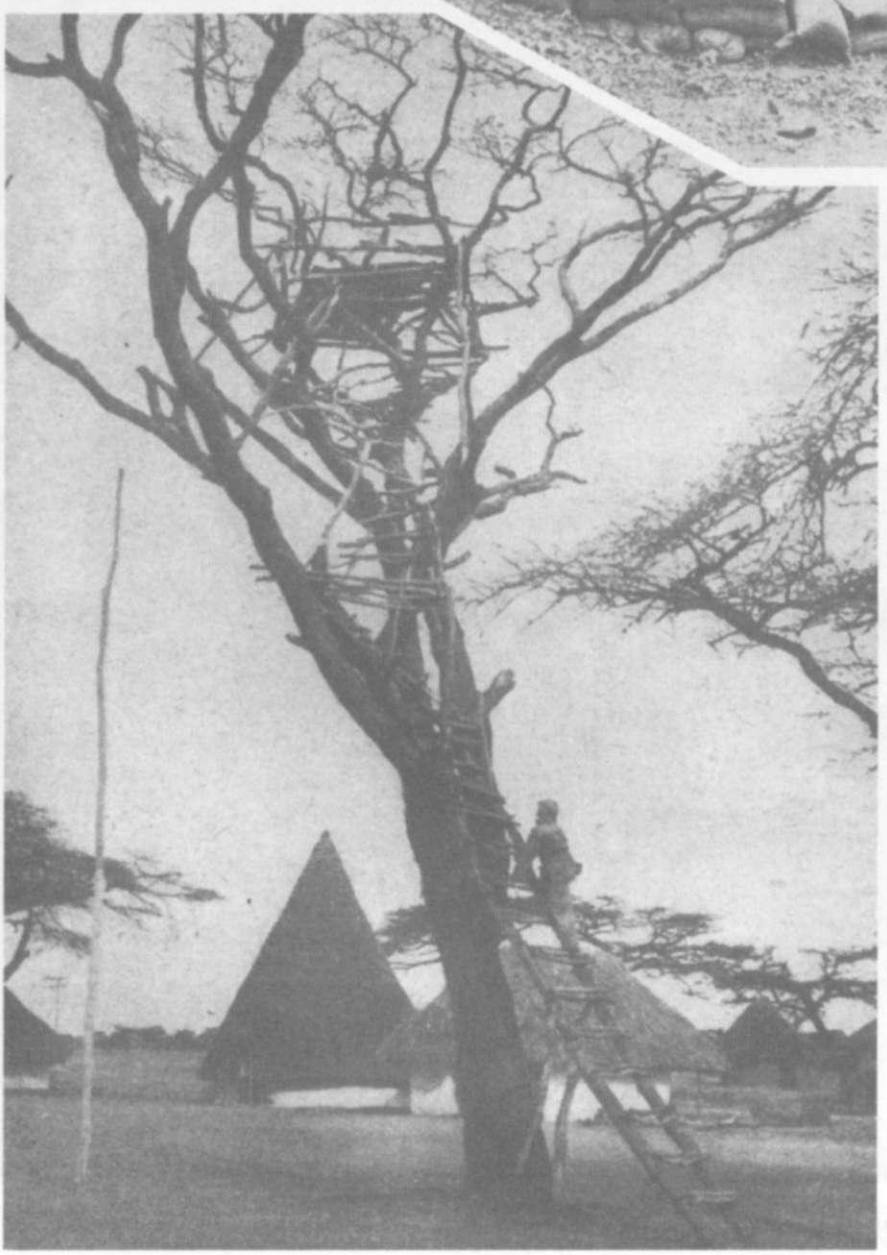
SUDANESE INFANTRYMEN at bayonet practice. They take readily to this form of fighting. Right is one of their sergeants.

SUDAN DEFENCE FORCE is the designation of the fine body of soldiers raised among the natives of the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan. Since the declaration of war it has rapidly expanded and has already proved its capacity for attack as well as defence in actions against the Italians in Eritrea. Above, a member of the camel patrol of the Force, attached to an Indian infantry brigade, is on the qui vive on the frontier. The Southern Sudan is a tsetse fly area, and as animals are particularly susceptible to this pest all the patrols of the Sudan Defence Force operating there are mechanized. Right, a patrol is leaving a lorry that has brought the men to their post. All the mechanized units in this area are provided with water and petrol to last 15 days.

Photos, British Official: Crown Copyright

South Africans in Action on the Kenya Front

TROOPS OF THE UNION now operating with other Imperial troops on the Kenya front occupy some very lonely posts. The mortar detachment, left, is holding a sand-bagged emplacement in a commanding position in the Turkana area, immediately south of the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, but lest there is any doubt that they keep their spirits up their dug-out is named the "Merry Mortars." Below is Lieut.-General D. P. Dickinson, G.O.C. the East African Forces in Kenya, with Colonel Dan Pienaar, a South African brigade commander, on his right.

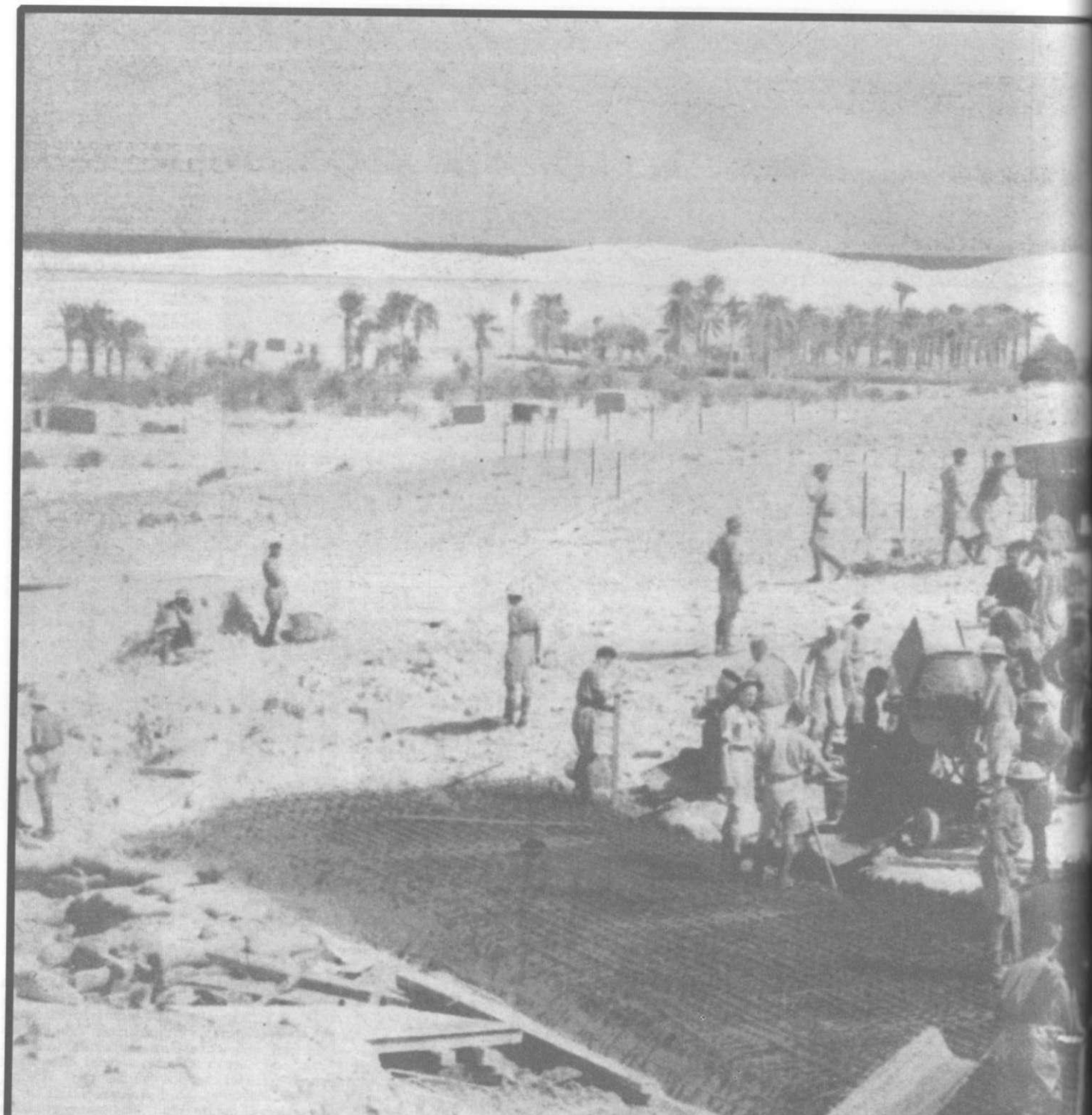


SOUTH AFRICANS were quick to cross swords with the Italians. On June 11, 1940, the day after Italy entered the war, bombers of the South African Air Force attacked objectives in Abyssinia, and on July 29 South African troops, the first volunteers for service outside the Union, arrived in Kenya, to be followed later by a much larger contingent. They were in action on December 16 when South African and East African troops, with Gold Coast Askaris and supported by armoured cars, artillery, and South African Air Force 'planes, raided the Italian post at El Wak, on the frontier of Italian Somaliland. Some 50 of the enemy were killed, and 20 Italians and a hundred natives were taken prisoner. Just before the attack was opened the Italian commander fled into the interior in a mule cart!

SKY-WATCHERS with the South African forces in Kenya have built a crow's-nest in a leafless tree to be used as a look-out for Italian air raiders approaching from Eritrea.

Photos, G.P.U., and Sport & General

On the Mediterranean Shore They Made Rea for 'One of the



HAPPY NEW YEAR?—GLANCES BACK & FORWARD

By the Editor

WISHFUL thinking has just been at its zenith. But remember Hamlet: "Nothing is either good or bad, but thinking makes it so." When wishing our friends a Happy New Year for 1941 most of us must have had a mental reservation in trying to equate our wishing with our thinking.

With the approach of Christmas I had the thought to turn over some old leaves of "The War Illustrated" in the intervals of preparing new ones for my readers to turn in 1941. The result, if not too joyous, is not too depressing . . . we have not hesitated to "keep our Christmas merry still." Optimist though I be I am heavily conscious that however happily we may have celebrated the swift-footed hours of the festive season we cannot quite have been blind to the veiled spectre of 1941 when we broadcast our wishes for a Happy New Year.

We are assuredly at the threshold of the Testing Year, and if thinking could really make it so we should all give a special vehemence to the "Happy." But what did the bells that rang out the old year tell us? I found an answer of sorts in those year-old pages of "The War Illustrated" which I looked over again in contemplative mood. Too often where I looked for souvenirs of victory and progress, I found records of disaster, dismay, disillusionment . . . bad stuff on which to build up hope and confidence. Yet out of things evil good has often issued.

The hopes that were springing in the breasts of all lovers of liberty and freedom when the first New Year of this monstrous War was ushered in were doomed to disappointment and the need to think intensively on good rather than on evil if we thus could "make it so" had become clamant in one of the loveliest summers that have ever smiled on this dear island of ours.

'Neutrality' a Broken Reed

BY odd chance the hopes of liberty-loving peoples everywhere were resting at the start of 1940 on a small heroic nation that had dared to stand up to a gigantic tyranny, just as the same eyes of admiration are today bent upon little valiant Greece standing up to the still more loathsome onslaught of Mussolini's Imperial Italy. Not that we can compare Finland with Greece save in the spirit of the two peoples. The geographical difficulty presented to Britain and her ally France in carrying the necessary aid to the Finns in their immortal stand against Russian aggression might, and could have been overcome had Norway and Sweden been ready to make a stand for freedom at the side of the democracies to which they naturally belong, instead of clinging to a futile "neutrality" which they were both powerless to maintain.

All that followed of disaster can in large measure be traced to this. Norway, too late in accepting Allied aid, merely led to her complete Nazi domination when the Allies had to withdraw from Trondheim on May 2. Sweden saved herself from material harm at the cost of accepting a Nazi domination that may be less apparent than real, betraying in the act everything that democracy implies. The end of Finland's heroic stand could have been no otherwise in the circumstances. The whole course of the War might well have been changed if the then free nations of Scandinavia had invited the cooperation of the Allies instead of opposing it while Finland was upright—even France, in full action with Britain, might well have found herself before the political rot in her body politic had time to eat its way down to her very vitals. A new health might have come to her.

It would be foolish to deny how high the star of Nazidom was mounting then; how much these events were to affect the vastly greater events of later months . . . and of tomorrow.

"WE shan't win the War by Wishful Thinking" was one of our headlines in the issue of January 15. "Britain's Shipwrights Are Outpacing the Nazis," was another headline of the week before, and the pictures showed shipping losses from U-boat action were speedily being made good by the energy of our shipbuilders . . . more than good. No such headline is likely to appear in any early number of 1941. "Where Will the Blow Fall in the West?" we were asking at the end of January, when the shameful French debacle at Sedan, must have seemed as remote as a collision in stellar space if any one had had the prevision to foretell it. The War was still "phoney" then. "Allies and Neutrals Present a Firm Front" (the world still accepted the false gospel of Maginot): Belgium would stand firm on the Albert Canal and Holland would hold back the Hun by flooding her defensive areas if he ever attempted to invade these two stalwart die-hard neutrals!

The Editor's New Year Wish

OUR surest Hope of Survival through 1941 and of Progress on the Way to Final Victory over the Forces of Evil is based upon Our having withstood and overcome the horrors and misfortunes of 1940 and achieving Our First Major Victory by Land, Sea and Air in the Near East. May 1941 prove the Year of Great Things for the British Empire and All Nations of Free Men!

A SERIES of articles "On the Fringes of the War" dealt with Denmark, Belgium, Holland, Rumania, Hungary, which had all been woven into the unpatterned warp and woof of Nazi Europe along with once mighty France months before the approach of the second war-time Christmas. In April so little did the peoples of France and Britain know of the alarming rot that was feverishly eating out the body and soul of France (thanks to the most brutal and corrupting censorship at Paris) that picturesque ceremonies (complete with military bands) could take place when the French handed over sectors of their ill-conceived and inadequately fortified Maginot extension line to the British and we could headline the picture-record "From Strength to Strength on the Western Front" . . . just seven weeks before the B.E.F. and "the little boats of England" at Dunkirk were providing History with the raw material for one of the greatest epics of heroism and human endurance its pages are ever likely to enshrine . . . a vast disaster made glorious by British valour.

"Happy New Year" wishes for 1940 had foreseen none of these world-shaking events.

But, little though we knew in January 1940 that we were so soon to face Britain's blackest hour—we hoped, trusted, and believed we should see a turn of the tide in 1940, nor have we been disappointed.

Even when the blitzkrieg on London was at its worst, even when the Nazis vowed to continue to "Coventrate" all our great cities one by one, even when the intensified submarine campaign was taking toll of British and Allied shipping at a formidable and indeed alarming rate, the tide was turning.

On the day that the unspeakable Mussolini announced his entry into the War Mr. Duff Cooper, in his broadcast, prophecied that Italy "which has never won a war, will prove more of a liability than an asset." A safe prophecy, which the Fascist fiascos in Albania and on the Egyptian frontier have speedily confirmed. Indeed, Italy's entry has proved the real bright spot of 1940. But somehow the liability she has thrown upon the Axis, by Mussolini in his conceit and folly trying to secure, on the cheap, a little military gilt for the embellishing of his gingerbread Empire, will have to be met. And how?

Nazi policy may not have fully provided for the new situation before it developed. If it had, then the Nazis are the most far-seeing of strategists. The thrust to the East was always an essential feature of their policy, the absorbing of Rumania and Hungary were preliminaries, but of which the "Drang nach Osten" has received a jolt for which Hitler has his "great friend Benito Mussolini" solely to thank. He may thank him in several ways. One that is not unlikely is to let Benito sizzle in his own Balkan stewpot rather than weaken the Nazi preparations for the one supreme task that remains to the mechanized conqueror of Europe—the Invasion of Britain. So long as Britain stands inviolate in her island stronghold—let her head be bloody but unbowed—the Nazi plan of world dominion has failed and will eventually crumble.

This implies a supreme effort to reduce Great Britain in 1941. With Italy shaping so badly under the hammering of our Army of the Nile and the Greeks gaining new strength from their victories, so considerably aided by British naval and air support, Hitler's alternative to a supreme effort against the British Isles would be speedily to occupy all France, take possession of the considerable elements of the French Fleet which the anti-British Darlan commands, secure a foothold in French North Africa, if not its complete domination, and force Italy, with her Fleet, to do his bidding not as a partner but as a cringing servant. Spain and Portugal would also have to be forced in.

The Year of Decision Has Dawned

BRITAIN would have much to say and more to do if Nazi policy took that direction, but not more than she could do. So that the likelier turn of events in 1941 is a genuine and desperate effort to invade this country, with intensified air attacks, U-boat torpedoing and long-distance bombing of our convoys, in order to force an issue. That, at least, is what we must be prepared to meet. General Wavell's brilliant defence of Egypt and rout of the Italians in Libya is a glorious achievement, indeed, a major battle of the War, and synchronising so accurately with the Greek triumph, it might well be the turning-point of the War in the East, but the true turning-point of the War will not be reached until the ever-present menace of the Invasion of Britain has been boldly met and defeated.

We may reasonably hope that the vast and urgently-needed supplies of war materials from America will soon be transformed from the astronomical figures of the dollars they are to cost and the overwhelming numerals of 'planes, tanks, ships and boats and other war supplies which have filled millions of columns in the American press for a year or more, into things of hard reality landed here in Britain. Our good American friends are lively talkers about what they are going to do: the best wish we can send them in this first week of the New Year is that, for our sake and their own, they will take our Mr. Morrison's advice and "Go to it!"

And so in ending this page of random reflections one may say that, bearing in mind the terrible trials from which we have just emerged unbowed in 1940, and looking with eager eye and no trembling of the lip as the Fates are fingering the curtain that occludes the coming events of 1941, there is much to justify our wishfully thinking that before the third Christmas of the War comes round the tide will indeed have turned for all the world to see and will be running strong for the nations that are fighting for freedom . . . even though interludes of trial and tribulation are still ahead of us.

The Spahis Were Amongst the Conquerors

SPAHIS, the native cavalry of France's African Empire, are represented amongst General Wavell's Army now engaged in Egypt and Libya. After the collapse of France many of them took the southward road from Syria and joined the Free French Forces. As these two photographs show, they are fine soldiers obviously well used to desert warfare. *Photos, British Official: Crown Copyright*

Anti-Aircraft Battery

How the Guns Are Trained on the Nazi Raiders

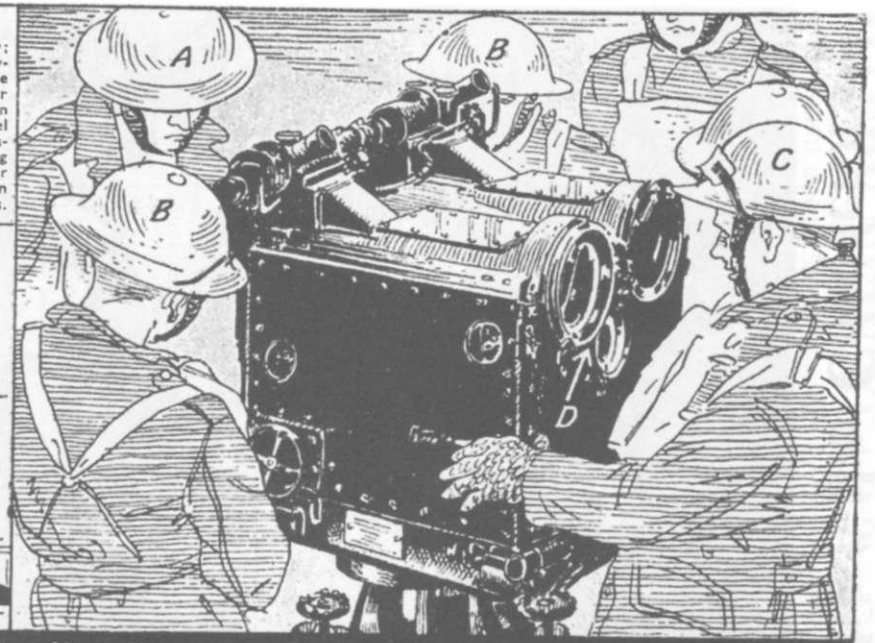
Specially drawn for THE WAR ILLUSTRATED *by War Artists & Illustrators Ltd.*

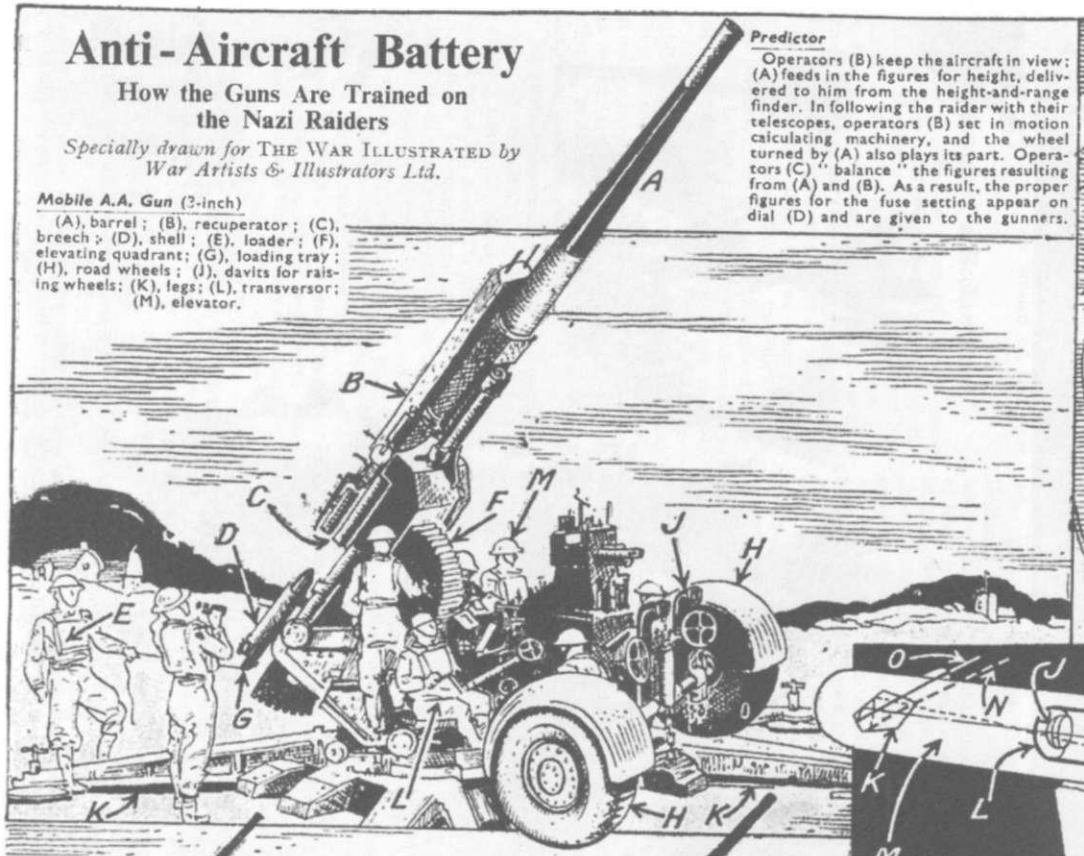
Mobile A.A. Gun (3-inch)

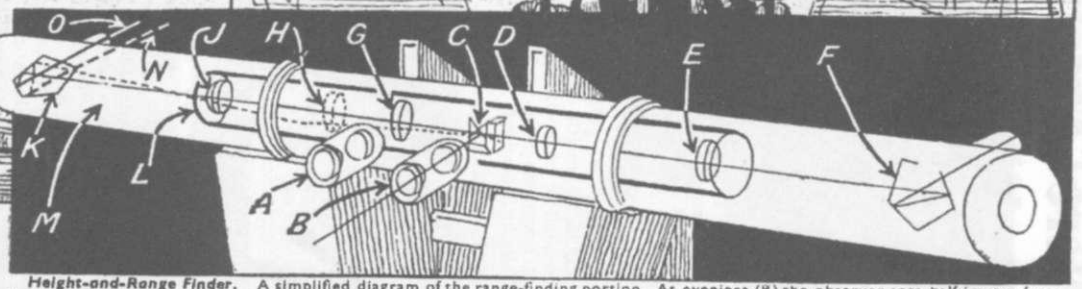
(A), barrel; (B), recuperator; (C), breech; (D), shell; (E), loader; (F), elevating quadrant; (G), loading tray; (H), road wheels; (J), davits for raising wheels; (K), legs; (L), transversor; (M), elevator.

Predictor

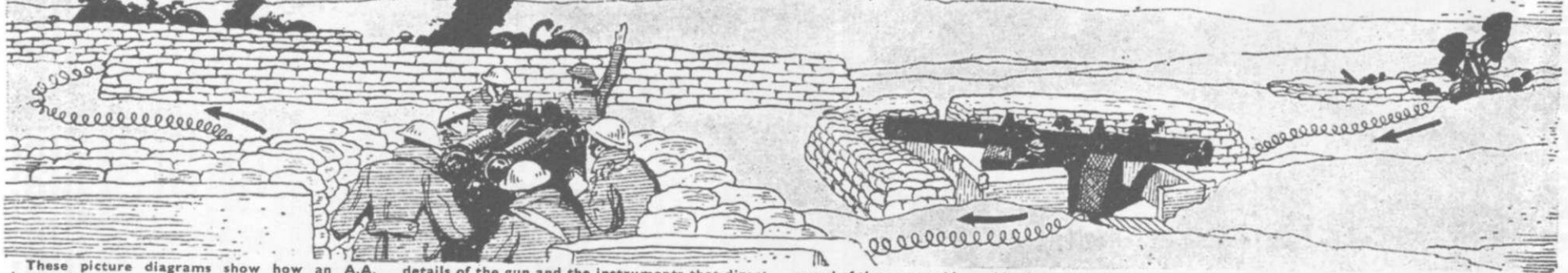
Operators (B) keep the aircraft in view; (A) feeds in the figures for height, delivered to him from the height-and-range finder. In following the raider with their telescopes, operators (B) set in motion calculating machinery, and the wheel turned by (A) also plays its part. Operators (C) " balance " the figures resulting from (A) and (B). As a result, the proper figures for the fuse setting appear on dial (D) and are given to the gunners.







Height-and-Range Finder. A simplified diagram of the range-finding portion. At eyepiece (B) the observer sees half-images from both apertures, coming from the pentagonal prisms (F) and (K) by way of the objective lenses (J) and (E); by manipulating the two deflecting prisms (G) and (H), the two half-images are made to coincide; simultaneously an index is moved over the range scale and the figure is read off at (A). (C) is the eyepiece prism; (D), halving glass; (L), frame tube; (M), outer tube; (N), (O), beams from object.



These picture diagrams show how an A.A. battery is linked up with its predictor, height-and-range finder and sound locator. A pictorial layout is given immediately above, and at the top are details of the gun and the instruments that direct its fire. The sound locator is used to find the aircraft when visual methods (by the predictor) are not practicable: its giant ears are turned until the sound of the approaching raider is loudest, and the information thus gathered is passed on to the gunners. The predictor forecasts the likely position of the aircraft (from course, bearing, speed, etc.) and enables the gunners to aim and fuse their shells to meet the raider in its flight. The height-and-range finder supplies certain essential particulars for the predictor calculations.

Uneasy Interlude in the War by Night

Whatever might have been its causes or motives, the slackening of the Luftwaffe's attack on Britain led to no such diminuendo in our own assault. Some of the chief targets of our bombers are listed below. The need for increased vigilance and for the increasing effort of all was stressed by the Premier in his review of the war situation on Dec. 19.

SHEFFIELD was the main objective of enemy bombers on Sunday night, December 15-16. This was the town's second heavy raid in four days, and again the Nazis began by dropping incendiaries; these were soon put out by the A.R.P. personnel. At another industrial town in the North many incendiaries were dropped during a raid lasting some hours. So prompt was the fire-fighting service that no conflagrations developed, and it might have been on this account that the raiders dropped no high-explosive bombs. Two bombs were dropped in an East Midlands area.

The R.A.F. on Sunday night carried out raids on railways, factories, and public utility services in the Berlin area. The city's underground railway was damaged and traffic was dislocated. Elsewhere our bombers attacked Frankfort-on-Main, the Kiel shipyards, and the port of Bremen.

There were Nazi raids on a small scale and of short duration on Monday night. The heaviest attack was that made on a West Midland town, where a bomb demolished a social club, beneath which was a wardens' post. Two wardens and three children were killed. One raider over the London area dropped three bombs, but there were no casualties. Five bombs fell in a town on the Thames Estuary and damaged houses.

R.A.F. bombers attacked Mannheim and Ludwigshaven on Monday night, and some of the fires they caused are shown in the remarkable air photo printed in this page. Up to Wednesday night Mannheim (chief industrial centre of the Upper Rhine) had been raided 31 times and Ludwigshaven 13 times. Early on Tuesday morning Coastal Command aircraft attacked the enemy submarine base at Bordeaux; a column of flame 300 feet high was seen to spring up.

No bombs were dropped on Britain during Tuesday, December 17; one enemy bomber was shot down in the afternoon by our fighters. Next afternoon another would-be raider was brought down by the R.A.F. Neither on Tuesday nor Wednesday night were Nazi aircraft observed over Britain, but our own bomber squadrons were very active on both nights. Mannheim—its many fires still raging—was again bombed on these dates, and on Wednesday night our pilots made the long trip to Italy to carry out the eleventh attack on vital factories in the Milan area; docks at Genoa and an aerodrome in Northern Italy were bombed also.

On Thursday evening London had its first Alert since Monday night; raiders attacked places in the Home Counties, and in the outskirts of the Metropolitan area. A bomber was shot down during daylight off the South-west coast. Liverpool and the Merseyside area were heavily attacked on the nights of Dec. 20, 21 and 22.

The recent slowing down of the Nazi aerial offensive caused some speculation, but no remission of our vigil or slackening of our effort. In Parliament on December 19 the Premier said that we were not afraid of any blow which might be struck against us, but we must make increasing preparations. The attacks in the air had slackened somewhat because of the weather, he went on, but they might easily have slackened in preparation for some other form of activity. Of the problem of the night raider Mr. Churchill said that every method of dealing with air fighting by night was being studied with passion and zeal by able and brilliant scientists and officers. So far we had been no more successful in stopping the German night raider than the Germans had been successful in stopping our aeroplanes that had ranged freely over Germany. We had struck very heavy blows, he added, and he instanced the raids on Mannheim.

ENEMY AND BRITISH AIRCRAFT LOSSES

	German	Italian	British
May	1,990	—	258
June	276	—	177
July	245	—	115
Aug.	1,110	—	310
Sept.	1,114	—	311
Oct.	241	—	119
Nov.	201	20	53
Dec. 1-19	39	—	7
Totals, May to Dec. 19	5,216	20	1,350

Daily Results

Dec.	Ger. Losses	Br. Losses	Br. Pilots Saved	Dec.	Ger. Losses	Br. Losses	Br. Pilots Saved
1 ...	8	5	5	12 ...	4	—	—
2 ...	2	—	—	13 ...	—	—	—
3 ...	—	—	—	14 ...	—	—	—
4 ...	1	—	—	15 ...	—	—	—
5 ...	14	2	1	16 ...	—	—	—
6 ...	—	—	—	17 ...	1	—	—
7 ...	2	—	—	18 ...	1	—	—
8 ...	1	—	—	19 ...	1	—	—
9 ...	1	—	—		—	—	—
10 ...	1	—	—	Totals	39	7	6
11 ...	2	—	—				

From the beginning of the war up to **Dec. 19, 3,035 enemy aircraft** destroyed during raids on Britain. R.A.F. losses **846**, but **426** pilots saved.

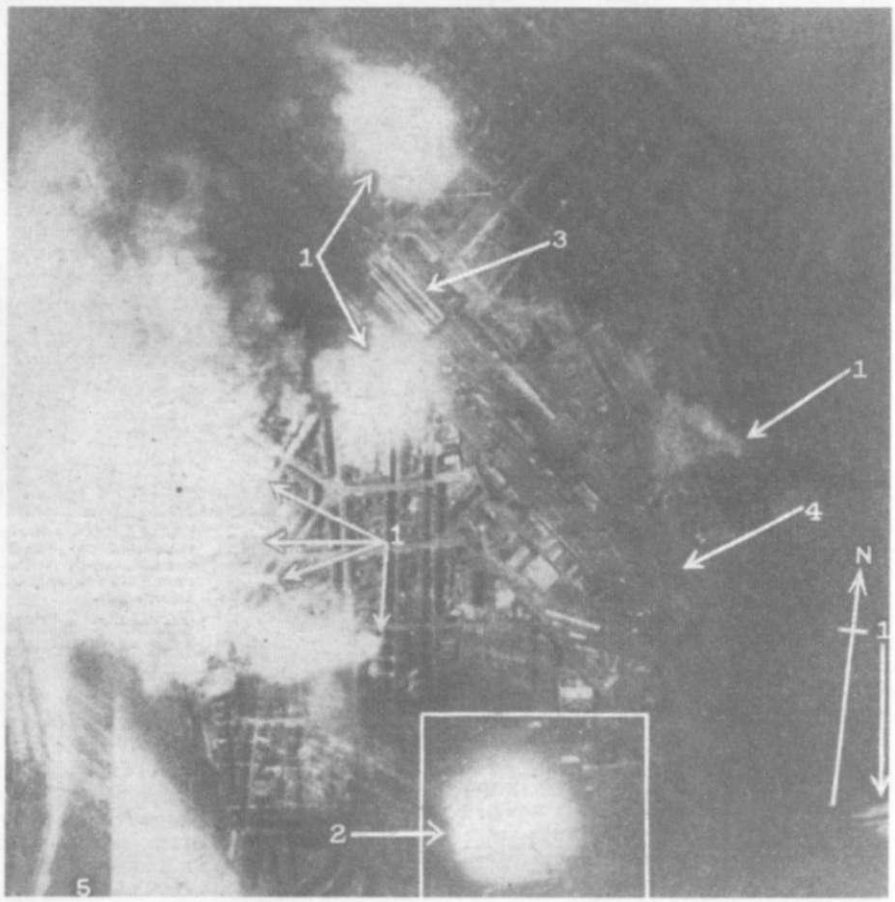
British bombers lost in November over German or occupied territory, **48**. In the East and in the Mediterranean **Britain lost 18 aircraft, against 59 Italian destroyed.** In **Western Desert** offensive, Dec. 7–19, **85** Italian aircraft destroyed in the air, and **56** destroyed on the ground or captured. British losses were **13** aircraft (five pilots saved).

Mr. Churchill on Nov. 5 gave weekly average of killed and seriously wounded civilians for September as 4,500; for October, 3,500. **Official figures for November:** Killed, 2,289 men; 1,806 women; 493 children under age 16. Wounded, 3,493 men; 2,251 women; 458 children

R.A.F. RAIDS UP TO DECEMBER 18, 1940

Outstanding objectives: figures denote number of raids carried out.

Antwerp, 28	Hamburg, 58
Berlin, 33	Hamm, 85
Boulogne, 66	Hanover, 26
Bremen, 52	Havre, Le, 29
Brest, 20	Kiel, 32
Calais, 50	Krefeld, 19
Cape Gris Nez, 23	Lorient, 33
Cherbourg, 22	Magdeburg, 20
Cologne, 51	Mannheim, 31
Dortmund, 35	Osnabruck, 35
Duisburg-Ruhrort, 33	Ostend, 49
Dunkirk, 41	Rotterdam, 25
Düsseldorf, 19	Schipol, 35
Emden, 26	Stavanger, 23
Essen, 32	Texel, 26
Flushing, 49	Waalhaven, 19
Gelsenkirchen, 37	Wilhelmshaven, 33



MANNHEIM, after the R.A.F. raid of December 16-17. This important industrial and distributing centre is built on a tongue of land between the rivers Rhine and Neckar. Opposite, on the other bank of the Rhine, is Ludwigshaven, also a much-visited target of our bombers. (1) north: fires burning fiercely N. and S. of (3) the Central Station; south: fires in the Lindenhof district; east: fires near the great marshalling yard (4), which is one of the main objectives. (2) the Heinrich Lanz armament works ablaze. (5) the Rhine. *British Official: Air Ministry Photo: Crown Copyright*

Not Even in the Adriatic Is Italy Safe

As the war in Albania proceeds and the Greeks continue to maintain their amazing offensive against the Italians, the Adriatic Sea becomes an ever more likely scene of armed conflict. Indeed, on Dec. 18, Britain's Mediterranean Fleet made a comprehensive sweep of its lower portion.

In places the Adriatic is more than 100 miles in width, but at its narrowest—the Straits of Otranto which divide the heel of Italy from Albania—it is less than fifty. And there it is that danger lurks for Italy. All Mussolini's transports have to cross that narrow channel, and every day that passes makes it more and more problematical whether the Italians will be able much longer to keep the channel open. For the Greeks are pressing northwards along the mountain paths that lead to Valona, an important port in Albania and the one which lies nearest to Italy. If Valona falls, then the British Navy will be able to make it a base for ships and 'planes operating against the Italian fleet and Italian towns and harbours. Valona has served Mussolini well; the time may come, and very soon, when it will serve Britain better. For Britain is not only a great sea power; she has captains who know how to use that power—something that Mussolini has never learnt.

As seas go, the Adriatic is small enough—its length is only some 470 miles—but it possesses a most decided strategical importance, for it separates Italy from the Balkans, always a storm-centre of European politics. Its Italian shore is for the most part low and uninteresting; and in the north, particularly around Venice, are marshy swamps and lagoons. The opposite shore, however, is steep and rocky with many inlets and innumerable islands. On this side there are a number of good harbours and roadsteads, whereas the Italian coast is very deficient in this respect.

Because of this deficiency Italy has long coveted the Dalmatian coast line, and to some extent her territorial ambitions in that quarter were satisfied following the Great War. By the Secret Treaty of London, signed on April 26, 1915, Italy was promised, in return for her forthcoming participation in the struggle on the side of the Allies, most of the province of Dalmatia, together with the islands which fringed its shore; Valona, too, was made part of the bargain, together with the little island of Saseno and the coast to the south as far as Chimara.

But when the terms of peace came to be determined by the treaty-makers in 1919, President Wilson would have nothing to do with the secret treaty and set his face sternly against the satisfaction of Italy's ambitions at the expense of the new kingdom of Yugoslavia; he had excellent grounds for doing so, inasmuch as the Italian population of Dalmatia was less than 4 per cent. The Treaty of St. Germain in 1919 gave Italy most of Istria, in the Adriatic's north-east, together with the great port of Trieste, but the Treaty of Rapallo, made between Italy and Yugoslavia in 1920, added to Italy's gains the port of Zara—which, at least, was predominantly Italian in its population—and the island of Lagosta. The little island of Saseno was retained by the Italians when they withdrew their troops from Albania; and in 1924 Fiume, which for some years had possessed a more or less independent status, was added to the Italian crown. Yugoslavia was left with a very large Adriatic coastline, so that, equally with Italy, she could claim that the Adriatic was "our sea"; but of the two countries Italy was in the better position, because, with both Brindisi and Saseno in her hands, she could close at will the Straits of Otranto.

Mussolini was not satisfied, however. For years it was part of his accepted policy to secure in one way or another the whole of the Dalmatian coast, and to some extent this ambition was realized when in 1939 Italian troops seized Albania—that conquest in the Balkan region of the new Italian Empire which they are now so rapidly losing to the Greeks.

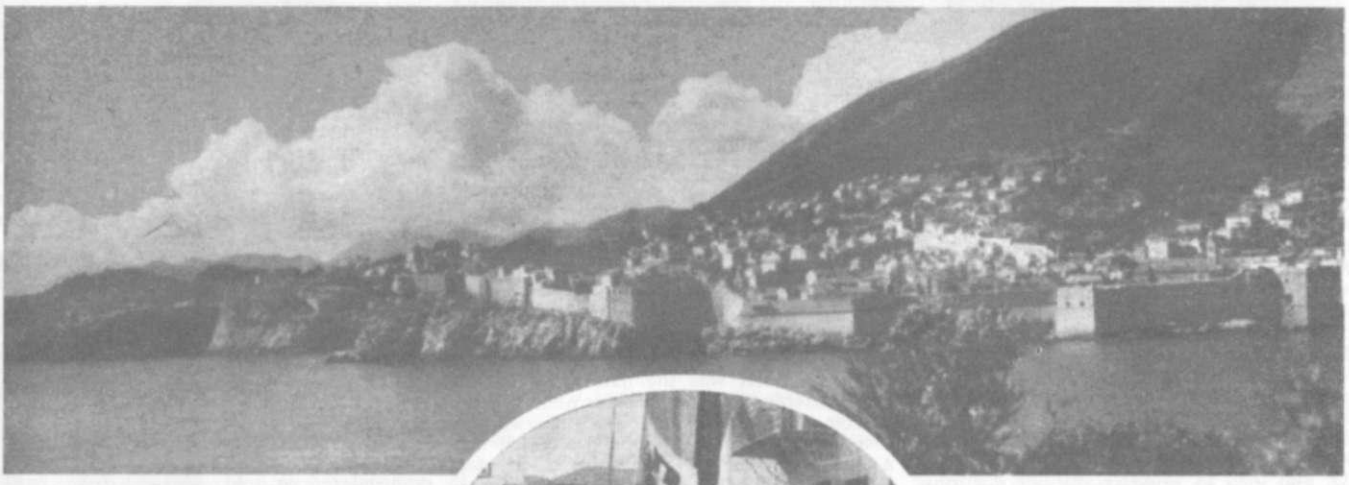
Why the Duce should want Dalmatia is not altogether clear, unless it be that he regards it as a jumping-off board for aggression in the Balkans. Possibly, too, he is desirous of securing more and better harbours for the Italian fleet, though here again the need for them is not altogether obvious if the Adriatic Sea be, indeed, already an Italian lake, as has so frequently been claimed. On the Italian side the principal ports are Brindisi, Bari, Ancona, Venice, Trieste, Pola and Fiume. All are places of considerable size, and Venice and Pola rank as naval bases. Brindisi is the Brundisium of the ancient Romans, whose principal naval station it was on the Adriatic Sea. For more than 2,000 years it has been the starting-point for the East, and its importance was enhanced when it was made the land terminus of the overland route to India, made possible by the opening of the Suez Canal; before the war passenger liners left there frequently for Greece, Egypt, Turkey and India.

Bari lies seventy miles to the north-west, and has some importance as a railway centre and manufacturing town. Ancona has one

DURAZZO is the chief port of Albania, and on May 8, 1939, its people witnessed the humiliating spectacle of Italian troops landing to rob the country of its independence. Though a town of only 9,000 inhabitants, it is the only one of the four Albanian ports that has up-to-date equipment. *Photos, British Official: Crown Copyright; and Fox*

SEA ROUTES OF THE ADRIATIC between Italian and Albanian ports and between the Italian ports are shown in this map, together with the distances that separate them. Bari and Brindisi are the ports on which the Italian troops in Albania depend for their supplies.

Ports on What Italians Claimed as 'Our Lake'



DUBROVNIK (Ragusa), situated in Yugoslavia on the Dalmatian coast, has been for centuries one of the principal ports of the Adriatic, though today its population is only about 14,000. The harbour is partly closed by sand, so large ships use Gravosa, four miles distant.

of the best harbours in Italy, where are established naval construction yards. Trieste was formerly the principal port of the Austria-Hungarian Empire, and it is still the chief channel of trade between Central Europe and the countries on the Adriatic and in south-east Europe; shipbuilding has been for long one of its chief industries. Pola was Austria-Hungary's chief naval station, and, as already mentioned, it is a base of the Italian fleet in the Adriatic. Fiume was the port through which, before the Great War, practically all the shipping trade of Hungary passed, but in recent years it has suffered through its allotment to Italy.

Rivals for Italy's Harbours

Of the Yugoslavian ports the most important is Split (Spalato in Italian)—indeed, its harbour is sometimes said to be the finest on the Adriatic coast. The town, with a population of some 35,000, is the capital of the province of Dalmatia; and with its good communications by road, railway and steamer it has long been of considerable commercial importance. After a stormy history it passed from the Venetians to the Austrians, who ceded it to the newly-created kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes in 1919.

VALONA (oval), the Albanian port which is one of the main objectives of the Greeks; the photo shows the Palace of the Prefecture. Above, is a view of Trieste (250,000), the great port, which is a principal outlet of Central Europe.

Then there is Ragusa, or Dubrovnik as it is now called; this lies towards the southern end of the Dalmatian coast, and of late years it has regained some of the importance it enjoyed in medieval times. Many a relic of its ancient greatness has survived to gladden the eyes of the tourists who have stepped ashore for a few hours from their cruising liner. To the south is the Albanian port of Durazzo, which still dreams of the days when it was the port opposite Brundisium, on the main highway from Rome across the Balkans to Byzantium, the Constantinople of later days and the Istanbul of today.

So we come to the last of the Adriatic ports, Valona, which is situated on an excellent harbour. During the Great War it was occupied by the Italians, who made it a naval and military base in their operations against the Austrians in the Balkans. When peace came they evacuated the place, but, as mentioned above, retained in their possession the little island of Saseno lying at the entrance to the bay. They seized it again on Good Friday of 1939—but for how long?

BARI is the port from which most of the Italian troops embark for Albania. Its harbour has been frequently raided by British airmen and much damage has been done. The place has a population of approximately 200,000.

Photos, Dorien Leigh, Wide World and E.N.A.

OUR SEARCHLIGHT ON THE WAR

Flandin Steps Into Laval's Shoes

MARSHAL PÉTAIN, in a message broadcast on December 14 by Lyons Radio, made a dramatic announcement: "Frenchmen! I have just taken a decision which I trust is in the interests of the country. M. Pierre Laval is no longer a member of the Government. M. Pierre Etienne Flandin has taken the portfolio of Foreign Affairs. Constitutional Act No. 4, which nominated my successor (Laval), is cancelled. It is for high reasons of internal policy that I have taken this decision. It has no repercussions at all on our relations with Germany. I remain at the helm—National Revolution continues." M. Flandin, who thus becomes Foreign Minister for the second time—the first was January-June, 1936—has held many posts in the French Cabinet, including that of Prime Minister, November 1934-June 1935. He has twice served under the premiership of M. Laval, first as Minister of Finance, 1931-32, and then as Minister without Portfolio, 1935-36. After the Munich crisis M. Flandin sent a congratulatory message to Hitler; before war broke out he worked for a rapprochement between France and Germany and was in favour of sacrificing the alliance with Britain. Since the Armistice he has kept in the background, except for some recent speeches in which he stressed the need for "wholehearted and loyal collaboration with Germany in the construction of the New Europe." M. Flandin has always been closely connected with Germany, while M. Laval has been a man of Italy rather than Germany. The new Foreign Minister, who is 6 ft. 4 in. in height and looks a typical big-business man, speaks English fluently. He had an English tailor, used to join English house parties for grouse and pheasant shooting, and described himself as "an old and faithful friend of Britain."

'La Libre Belgique'

DESPITE the Gestapo, Belgian patriots are producing a secret newspaper in occupied Belgium. Like its forerunner in the Great War, it is called "La Libre Belgique," and a few copies of an August issue have reached free territory. Among other things it contains an account of an incident that had already leaked through—the deliberate bombing of Brussels by German 'planes and their attempt to lay this act of treachery at Britain's door. "In the night of August 17-18 an aeroplane dropped bombs on the centre of Brussels, causing deaths and injuries. What was the nationality of the guilty machine? The Germans went to great trouble not to prove (we are still awaiting their proofs) but to make believe that it was a British aeroplane. The people of Brussels were not deceived for a moment . . . Whereas almost every night Brussels is awakened by furious anti-aircraft fire, nothing was heard of it on the night in question. If this was a British aeroplane, why did not the Germans fire at it?"

Underground Food Trains

LONDON'S night life underground is becoming highly organized. The provision of bunks and facilities for heating and cooking is adding enormously to the comfort of the stoical shelterers, and recently those availing themselves of the Tube stations gave a rousing welcome to a new form of train that drew up at their dormitory platforms. It was a food train, carrying hot drinks, meat pies, sausage rolls, sandwiches, and so on, and it had received a ceremonial send-off from Bank Station in the presence of the Lord Mayor, the Minister of Food, and the Chairman of the London Passenger Transport Board. There are now six of these "Tube Refreshments Specials." They leave six London Transport depots every afternoon laden with seven tons of food. Statistics show that in one night Tube shelterers consume 30,000 buns, more than 21,000 slabs of cake and 13,000 gallons of cocoa. These items, as well as soup, sausages and pies, are supplied from 134 canteens serving 80 stations, and 1,000 women are employed in the service.

TUBE REFRESHMENTS SPECIAL is the name given to the special train which carries food for distribution to the various stations on the London Transport system used by shelterers from air raids. Here we see the provisions being checked by officials before they are loaded on board the train. *Photo, Fox*

R.A.F. Fighters' Cannon

IT has been known for some time that British fighters are being equipped with cannon, and that these have accounted for many raiders recently shot down. It was not until December 12, however, that the Air Ministry News Service released a specific instance of their successful use. This victory was gained over the Channel by a 21-year-old R.A.F. pilot who has already won the D.F.C. and bar. According to his account, the Messerschmitt, when struck by the shell, just exploded into little bits in the air. The chief advantages of the cannon over the machine-gun are its longer range and greater damaging power. The shell easily pierces the armour plating encasing German aircraft, whereas with the machine-gun penetration was difficult.

Badge For Bomb Disposal Units

A SPECIAL badge which will be worn by personnel of bomb disposal units is being introduced by the War Office. The design is a bomb embroidered in gold on a red background, and the badge will be sewn on the left sleeve between the elbow and the wrist. Only the men of the Royal Engineers actually engaged in this dangerous work will be entitled to wear the badge; it will be withdrawn from personnel when their turn of duty expires.

BOMB DISPOSAL Unit's new badge, shown above, measures three inches by two inches. This badge will be worn only by men during the time they are working with the squads. *Photo, British Official: Crown Copyright*

Italy Foots Another Bill

BLOW after blow is being struck at Italy—in the Mediterranean, in Albania, in the Western Desert—and now comes the news that she is having to pay in hard cash for the privilege of bombing Egypt. The Egyptian Government has instructed the Official Trustee to make a valuation of Italian property in Egypt which may be devoted to paying compensation to raid sufferers. It is expected that a total sum of £15,000,000 will be assessed in this way. Alexandria's raid victims have already had £15,000 allocated for their relief. Indignation against the Italians increases daily, and a suggestion has been made in the Egyptian Parliament to make reprisals against those not yet interned, who are given a small daily subsistence allowance by the Official Trustee.

Red Cross Parcel Ship

FORTY-ONE THOUSAND parcels a week are being made up in this country for prisoners of war in Germany, and 10,000 a week will shortly be sent from Canada. The difficulties of transport are, however, so colossal that more than 150,000 parcels have been delayed between the Spanish frontier and Geneva, owing to insufficiency of Spanish rolling stock and disorganization of the rail transport. Through occupied France the obstructions have been legion. Now a new route has been arranged, and a ship chartered by the British Red Cross has taken aboard at Lisbon 200 tons of food parcels and 160 tons of clothing, and will convey these to Marseilles. Once the cargo leaves Lisbon the organization of the journey will be undertaken by the International Red Cross, who also will be responsible for the subsequent rail journey from Marseilles to Geneva, and for the handing over of the parcels to the German authorities for transmission to the camps

This is What I Saw in Nibeiwa Camp

As British troops made their triumphant advance in the Western Desert of Egypt they were scavenging the stores and equipment of an entire Italian army. The fantastic scene is dramatically pictured in the following dispatch from a Special Correspondent of the "Daily Telegraph," who visited Nibeiwa Camp shortly after its capture.

FOLLOWING the British army's advance in Egypt, a press correspondent drove across a landscape strewn with millions of pounds' worth of war material. He said:

It was a staggering sight. There were places where lorries were dotted across the desert as far as I could see in every direction.

For mile after mile dumps of ammunition, camouflaged with scrub, were neatly displayed alongside the tracks. Big barrels of diesel oil were tumbled about in huge heaps everywhere.

The most fantastic thing I found was Nibeiwa Camp. It was more of a military township housing thousands of men than a camp, and it was full to bursting with stores.

Men must have spent days collecting stones from the face of the desert to build these mile-long walls, complete with ramparts, bastions, machine-gun nests, tank traps, land mines, and artillery emplacements. Tents and dugouts, counter-sunk well below the level of the earth, must have meant hours of arduous digging in tough, stony ground.

Dispersed at regular intervals over a couple of square miles were vehicles ranging from 6 h.p. Fiat runabouts to 10-ton trucks. A score of medium tanks had already been removed by the British salvage corps and grouped outside the walls. Bicycles, motor-cycles, and mules were scattered everywhere.

Cookhouses and the quartermasters' stores were bulging with tinned goods. Case after case was filled with yard-long packets of macaroni. I found British troops varying their rations with strange diets of quince jelly, tomato extract, tunny fish and spaghetti in sauce. Wooden casks and canvas bottles brimmed with excellent Chianti. There were liqueurs and mineral water in almost every tent. Tins of olive oil were stacked six feet high.

British and Indian Tommies were gazing spellbound at this evidence of luxury. Some officers' messes had elegant silverware. There was plenty of perfumery. Gorgeous pieces of dress uniform in gilt, satin and velvet looked doubly incongruous amid desert dust.

Then I wandered on, noting new surprises at every step. The dead Gen. Maletti's tunic with four flamboyant rows of decorations, a tent full of beautiful wireless equipment, a handsome young Italian with a grenade in one hand and a rifle in the other lying dead on the roof of a tent.

As I progressed to the front line I met big Fiat and Lancia lorries, brimful of dusty, dishevelled captives. Generals and colonels had been removed from their special camp to make room for new arrivals. And still prisoners were being taken. . . .

ITALIAN MOTOR VEHICLES were captured by the hundred during the British advance in the Western Desert. Many of them were still fit for service, but scattered about the sands were such wrecks as these, caught by British fire—tangled masses of metal left behind in the trail of a defeated army. *Photo, British Paramount News*

They Showed Me How to Fly a Spitfire

The first batch of Canadian-trained airmen arrived in England during the week-end of November 23, 1940. The training of a fighter pilot under the Empire scheme is described below by the "Daily Mail" correspondent Walter Farr, who spent a day as a pupil at a flying-school in Ottawa.

STANDING waiting for me on the flying ground was a man who has spent years training fighter pilots at a famous flying school in England.

Now, with other R.A.F. officers, he has come to Canada to take charge of the training of fighters here.

The instructor eyed me carefully.

"Ever piloted a 'plane?" he asked.

"No," I said.

"The important part of a fighter pilot's training is aerobatics," he said. "It teaches you to be nippy in the air."

I said the questions everybody was asking were, How do the fighter pilots get hardened to flinging themselves about? What is the secret of their brilliance?

"You will understand after the flight we are going to make," the instructor told me.

He handed me a Service parachute—it is extremely heavy, and I found getting into it rather like getting into a strait-jacket—a leather helmet with headphones fitted inside, and a speaking-tube gadget. He pointed to a little metal ring on the left side of the parachute and said, "Only in case of trouble pull that when you jump out."

We clambered into a two-seater American-made Harvard trainer. He sat in front, I in the back seat with a complete set of duplicate controls in front of me—joystick, rudder controls, everything. One thing he had which I had not was a mirror fixed above his right eye so that he could watch me.

"Strap him in tight," he ordered the mechanics.

Four straps were fixed over my shoulders and held by a pin on the chest. "In case of emergency just pull out the pin," I was told.

Above the roar of the machine I could hear the instructor's voice perfectly in the headphones.

At least a hundred other Harvard trainers, each carrying pupil and instructor, were whizzing about the 'drome, taking off, landing, practising formation flying. At two nearby reserve 'dromes there was the same intensive activity.

We had to queue up to take off. We shot up high above the aerodrome.

"Feel all right?" asked the instructor. "O.K. We will now do a loop."

The 'plane somersaulted at terrific speed, and I saw a bit of Ottawa blot out the pale blue Canadian sky and a bit of wing mixed up in the picture. I felt myself hanging by straps. Then we flattened out again. The instructor glanced at me through the mirror.

"Feel all right?" he repeated. "O.K. We will now fly on our backs."

We spun over and went along upside down for a few hundred yards. "Now, if you feel O.K., we will do a roll off the top."

We looped again, then, instead of flattening out at once, began spiralling down at terrific speed. I felt a terrific dragging at my cheeks, my head throbbed and I got a sort of hang-over feeling in the stomach.

We flattened out again. My head felt hot as if all the blood had rushed to it.

"I expect you'd like a little air," said the instructor, opening a window in the transparent celluloid cover over the cockpit. Air never tasted better.

He saw me in the mirror mopping my brow

I WAS THERE!

and said, " Perhaps we'd better fly along and take a look at the scenery for a while.

" One of the big objects of this aerobatics stuff is that it tests whether a man would be capable of handling controls in emergencies," continued the instructor.

We did some more stunts, steep turns, banking, flying in and out of clouds. I was beginning to get used to it. I began to release my grip on the cockpit sides, sit back and relax.

Then came a voice in the 'phone.

" Of course, Spitfires and Hurricanes move much faster than this."

We finished up the lesson with a bombing dive, and flew over a nearby lake.

" See that white buoy floating down there ? " asked the instructor. " That's the bombing target."

We shot up higher, poised like a hawk, then plunged from five thousand feet straight down, reaching a speed of three hundred miles an hour. There was again that pulling feeling on the cheeks and head throbs.

"The 'plane is now said to be ' mushing,' " said the instructor. " In other words it is falling faster than the engine could move it."

One thousand feet—two thousand feet—we roared down. " At this second I would have dropped my bomb," said the instructor.

The machine by now was skimming upwards again. " That is how 'planes bomb Berlin," explained the instructor.

We landed and, to my astonishment, I was able to have luncheon. Long before I had finished the instructor excused himself and went off to make a flight with more pupils. He does this day and night.

CANADIAN AIRMEN having completed their training under R.A.F. instructors in Canada are seen with a British sergeant. The latter points out 'planes in flight. A vivid description of a day spent by Walter Farr as a pupil at an Ottawa flying-school is given in the preceding page.
Photo, " News Chronicle "

Two of My Torpedoes Hit a Nazi Ship

In the middle of December 1940, H.M. submarine " Sunfish " (see page 462, Vol. II) returned to port after an underwater patrol off the Norwegian coast, where she sank a German supply ship and badly damaged a tanker. Her commander, Lieutenant George Colvin, here tells of the " Sunfish's " achievements.

On his return to port Lieut. Colvin said that he had done several patrols without having the luck to see anything. He continued :

On this one we were sent to do part of the North Sea. One day about teatime we saw, close inshore, a merchant ship of about 4,000 tons, deeply laden. She was in an unfavourable position for attacking, but we saw that in a few minutes it would be too late to attack her. So we closed at high speed and I fired torpedoes from long range.

There was a long wait while they ran towards their target. I was watching with the periscope kept low in case it should be seen. I could see only the upper works of the ship.

After some minutes there were two heavy explosions, and I saw two great humps of water. The ship had been hit by two of my torpedoes.

Within a minute I raised the periscope to its full extent, and by that time there was no trace left of the ship. She had a heavy cargo, probably iron ore, and she must have broken up and sunk like a stone.

If the " Sunfish " had surfaced for survivors we might have been attacked by 'planes, so we turned and went away. Next day we operated at another part of the coastline. We were submerged all the time. Just after sunset I saw a steamer close astern. It was getting dark, and difficult to see, so we turned quickly to attack.

I fired. The torpedoes were running true, but suddenly the ship turned and they missed.

Next day, the last of the patrol, we sighted a tanker of about 4,000 tons creeping along close to shore. I fired torpedoes and heard them explode, but I was unable to see whether they had hit.

But I came up to periscope depth and saw that the tanker had stopped and was blowing off steam from her funnels after turning a complete circle. A small Diesel coaster of about 200 tons came alongside her.

Half an hour later the tanker got under way and went off slowly, with the coaster in attendance. She was crippled. That was the last hour of our patrol, and we turned and left for our base.—" *Daily Express.*"

H.M. SUBMARINE "SUNFISH," whose commander, Lieut. Colvin (arrow), recounts in this page the memorable feat performed by his ship off the Norwegian coast in December 1940. In April the "Sunfish" accounted for four Nazi ships amounting to a tonnage of over 16,000. This photograph shows the submarine at her base with her crew lined up on deck.
Photo, G.P.U.

Thanks to Them You Got Your Xmas Greetings

(1) In some sorting offices enemy action had resulted in the failure of the electric light, yet sorting went on by the light of guttering candles. (2) Steel helmets protected the postmen from shrapnel and falling masonry. (3) The Post Office engineers have been busy repairing damaged telephone cables; hundreds of telephone wires must be joined up correctly. (4) Working on the top floor of a London telephone exchange, these girls are wearing their steel helmets and have their gas-masks handy.

Photos, Fox, Keystone, L.N.A., and "News Chronicle"

WORDS OF HOPE AND WARNING FOR 1941

The Address to America with which Lord Lothian Closed his Career of Service

The Grim Picture That Has Been Dispelled

WHEN I last made a public speech in the United States we had just experienced a terrific shock—the overthrow of France. If you recall those dismal days you will remember there was something like despair among many diplomatic and business circles in Washington, New York, and other cities of the United States. Hitler had announced that he would dictate peace in London in August, or, at the latest, in the middle of September. And hadn't he always been right over his military dates? Those June and July dates were indeed gloomy days for us and for you. But that grim picture has been dispelled, at any rate for the present, by the action of the people of a small island in the North Sea, nobly and valiantly aided by the young nations of the British family across the seas.

First there was the retreat from Dunkirk. . . . Then came Mr. Winston Churchill, with almost the whole of the rest of the world on the run, standing undaunted in the breach, defying in matchless oratory the apparently irresistible power and prestige of Hitler and National Socialism. Then came reports from your own air attachés that the R.A.F. had taken the measure of the German air force despite its superiority in numbers and was on the high road to establishing its supremacy over the British Isles. Then followed the great air battles of August and September in which the Germans lost nearly 200 machines in a day and five or six to one in pilots. Then came the brutal bombing of London, and especially East London, by night. But there was no flinching before Hitler's attempted intimidation no crying for peace, no suggestion that, though we were almost alone, we had had enough.

And, finally, has come the gradual petering out of the much-heralded invasion of Britain.

Thus, if Hitler won the first round of the great battle which began in Norway in April, we have won the second, for without the conquest of Britain Hitler cannot win the war. But do not think that Hitler's Nazidom is going to be easily overthrown. Hitler is certainly going to make another attempt next year—and earlier rather than later—to beat down our resistance by new methods of still greater violence and to open the way to world war and domination by the Nazis.

The True Nature of National Socialism

I DO not think even now we realize the true nature of National Socialism. Modern National Socialism is the reassertion of the strongest tradition in German and Prussian history—belief in an all-powerful military State creating order and discipline at home by ruthless Gestapo methods and expanding its wealth and power by ruthless conquest abroad.

Under Hitler the free nations of Europe are never going to reappear. They are going to be reduced permanently to political, economic and military impotence so that they can act as suppliers of serfs to the ruling German race.

Hitlerism cannot stop and become peaceful. Nazi Germany is organized for war and totalitarian economics and for nothing else. Its economic system, like everything else, is built on fraud. War and preparation for war is its only real remedy for unemployment.

This war, therefore, is not a war between nations like the last war. It is more of a revolution than a war—a revolutionary war, waged by Hitler and his military totalitarian machine, against all other nations and the free world in which we have lived, so as to make them military, political and economic satellites in a totalitarian world empire. Then Hitler will have given the world peace—the peace of death; and employment—employment of the slave.

Our Navy is Strung Out Terribly Thin

HITLER has lost the second round of the war. But we think he is certainly going to renew the attack on Britain with all his might this winter and spring. This time he is going to concentrate on the sea . . . [and] our Navy, with the tremendous tasks which rest on it, none of which it has shirked or evaded, is strung out terribly thin.

We think this is a situation which concerns you almost as much as it concerns us. It has long been clear that your security, no less than ours, depends upon our holding the Atlantic impregnable and you the Pacific. So long as this is so the way of life to which we are attached can continue, and our free economic system can resist totalitarian attack. But if one of these two navies fails and the unity of the British Commonwealth begins to disappear, the control of trade routes begins to pass to Axis powers, and those controlling bastions of sea-power which now keep war away from America become the jumping-off points from which it can be menaced.

We have both, therefore, a vital interest in decisively defeating the now rapidly maturing naval attack on British communications. It is the best way of preventing a spread of the war, and an essential step towards that victory which will eventually follow the failure of Hitler to destroy Great Britain, both in the air and on the sea, is the uninterrupted flow of American munitions to the British Isles.

With America's Help We Are Sure of Victory

WE have no illusions, therefore, about 1941. It is going to be a hard, dangerous year . . . But we aren't in the least dismayed. With help from you we are confident that we can win, and win decisively, by 1942, if not before.

We are confident, first of all, for spiritual reasons. The core of Hitlerism is moral rottenness and the belief that the use of utter brutality, ruthless power and the prosecution of domination is the road to greatness both in individuals and in nations. Hitlerism is a tragedy in Germany. Its doctrine is not true. All history proves it wrong.

The core of the Allied creed, for all our mistakes of omission and commission, is liberty, justice and truth, and that, we believe, will infallibly prevail if we have resolution and the courage to resist to the end.

But on the side of armaments also we have great growing assets. The curve of our munition and aeroplane production is steadily rising—despite bombing. The number of our divisions, of our aeroplanes and our pilots is also steadily going up. What is more, the important young nations of the Commonwealth, Canada, Australia, South Africa and New Zealand, are fast getting into their stride.

Indian troops and Indian munitions are now coming into the battle fronts, and ever-increasing resources are coming from colonies and territories loyal to a man and proud of their membership of the Commonwealth.

The whole of this growing aggregation of power is now being mobilized. Its first task is to defend that great ring of defensive positions which lie around you—Britain itself, Gibraltar, Cape Town, Egypt, the Suez Canal, Singapore. As long as we can hold these positions we and the democratic world beyond them are safe.

Our second task is to enable us to deliver increasingly formidable blows at Germany itself and at her allies, one of whom is already beginning to crack, and to bring assistance to the subjugated peoples who are now once more beginning to show signs of resistance to Hitler's will. But that result is not yet secure. It will be put to the test in 1941. If we can stave off the attack on Britain; if we can outlast next year still holding all the positions I have mentioned, Hitlerism in the end must go down.

By ourselves we cannot be sure of this result—though we will try our best . . . but with your help in aeroplanes, munitions and ships, and on the sea and in the field of finance now being discussed between your Treasury and ours, we are sure of victory.

Britain Was Never More Truly Democratic

THE last thing I want to say concerns the future. There were two things which I found the ordinary citizens of Britain thinking about. The first was that all his and her suffering and sacrifice should, if possible, end not all wars, for human nature is not probably yet ready for that, but the kind of total war Hitler is waging, with its hideous mutilation and destruction from the air, its brutal persecution of conquered peoples. The second was that after this war no one who had done his duty should be thrown on the scrap-heap of unemployment, with nothing but bonus or dole. Somehow or other employment must be found for everybody.

Some people are spreading a legend that democracy is disappearing from Britain and that she will come out at the end of the war a Fascist or Communist State. Nothing could be further from the truth. I have never known Britain more truly democratic. The British are not going to change their essential character. It has shown itself in this war. They will move forward, of course, with the times, but without revolutionary violence.

But the more people think about the future the more they are drawn to the conclusion that all real hope depends on some form of cooperation between the United States and the British Commonwealth of Nations . . . The only nucleus round which a stable, peaceful, democratic world can be built after this war is if the United States and Great Britain possess between them more aeroplanes, ships of war and key positions of world power such as I have described than any possible totalitarian rival. Then only will political and industrial freedom be secure.

I HAVE done. I have endeavoured to give you some idea of our present position and dangers, the problems of 1941 and our hopes for the future. It is for you to decide whether you share our hopes and what support you will give us in realizing them.

We are, I believe, doing all we can. Since May there is no challenge we have evaded, challenge we have refused. If you back us you won't be backing a quitter.

The issue now depends largely on what you decide to do. Nobody can share that responsibility with you. It is the great strength of democracy that it brings responsibility down squarely on every citizen and every nation. And before the Judgement Seat of God each must answer for his own actions.—*From the Address which Lord Lothian, British Ambassador to Washington, penned just before his sudden passing on Dec.* 12, 1940.

Thanks to Them Britain Is Not Hungry

"ACTION STATIONS!" is the order, and the men who guard Britain's food convoys leap to their gun to beat off an enemy attack. Day in, day out, in blazing sun and freezing cold, these ever-vigilant guardians of our vital ocean life-lines are instantly prepared for the Nazi U-boat or bomber seeking to destroy their precious charges. In the last war the convoy system triumphed over the submarine menace in the end. But today the air weapon has greatly strengthened the Germans' striking power, and the problem of safeguarding merchant shipping is proving much harder to solve.

Photo, Planet News

OUR DIARY OF THE WAR

SUNDAY, DEC. 15, 1940 *470th day*

In the Air—R.A.F. bombed important targets in Berlin area, including railways, factories and utility services. Other aircraft attacked inland port of Frankfort-on-Main, Kiel shipyards and port of Bremen.

War against Italy—Operations proceeding on Libyan frontier where British troops have now penetrated into Italian territory. R.A.F. bombed Appolonia, Bomba, Derna and Benina.

During night of December 14-15 and 15-16 R.A.F. attacked Bardia, Tmimi, Gazala, Tobruk, El Gubbi and El Adem. Bardia suffered particularly heavy raid. Our fighters shot down 12 enemy aircraft.

Long-range bombers carried out heavy raid on Naples during night of December 14-15. Five direct hits on concentration of cruisers and destroyers. Aerodrome, railway station and junctions also attacked.

Considerable air activity reported from Italian East Africa; Assab, Gura, Zula, Bahadar and Gondar among places raided.

Home Front—No bombs dropped over Britain during day. Widespread activity at night. Sheffield area heavily attacked. Another north of England industrial town also raided, and an urban district in East Midlands.

Five enemy machines brought down.

Greek War—Athens reported successful local combats in which fresh heights, numerous prisoners and machine-guns had been captured. Enemy aircraft resumed intensive action.

MONDAY, DEC. 16 *471st day*

In the Air—R.A.F. made sustained attack on targets at Mannheim and suburbs. Other aircraft dropped heavy bombs on submarine base at Bordeaux. Several aerodromes were also attacked, and six merchant vessels off French coast.

War against Italy—British troops occupied Sollum and Fort Capuzzo, and captured frontier forts of Musaid, Sidi Omar and Shefferzen.

Bari raided by R.A.F. during night of December 16-17.

During night of December 15-16 Gura and Asmara, East Africa, were raided by R.A.F. bombers.

Frontier post of El Wak, Italian Somaliland, successfully raided by S. African and E. African troops.

Home Front—Enemy day activity slight. Few bombs fell in E. Anglia and S.E. England. At night bombs were dropped in London area, a Thames Estuary town, Liverpool area and the Midlands.

Greek War—Greeks continued to advance north of Premeti and westwards from Ersek. Italians retired with losses towards Klisura. Enemy said to have evacuated Chimarà and neighbouring villages. Heavy night attack made by R.A.F. on Durazzo.

TUESDAY, DEC. 17 *472nd day*

In the Air—R.A.F. bombers again attacked industrial targets at Mannheim. Other aircraft bombed ports and aerodromes on Channel coasts.

War against Italy—New British forces reached Bardia sector, where severe fighting was reported. Prisoners now number 40,000. Reconnaissance flights showed enemy retreating towards Derna. R.A.F. fighters machine-gunned retiring troops between Bardia and Tobruk. Derna raided during night. Heavy night raid on Benina aerodrome, 18 aircraft being destroyed.

Assab bombed both by night and day.

Reported that offensive patrolling had recommenced on considerable scale in northern frontier district of Kenya.

Enemy raided Port Sudan, causing some damage.

Home Front—During daylight enemy air activity was very slight. No night raids. One enemy bomber shot down by our fighters.

Greek War—Klisura defile being bombarded from all sides. Fires seen at Klisura caused by blowing up of ammunition dumps. Advance made north of Premeti. In coastal sector Greeks continue to force enemy to abandon positions.

General—By request of German Ambassador Abetz, Laval was released from confinement to which he was sent after dismissal.

WEDNESDAY, DEC. 18 *473rd day*

On the Sea—British motor torpedo-boats carrying out offensive patrol off Belgian coast made successful attack on large armed enemy supply ship; it was seen to break up and sink. Enemy escort ship engaged by machine-gun fire and hit.

In the Air—Another heavy bombing attack made on Mannheim and four new fires started. Other aircraft bombed submarine base at Lorient.

War against Italy—Operations in Bardia area continued. Town was shelled by Navy and bombed day and night by R.A.F.

R.A.F. bombed Pirelli works at Milan, docks at Genoa and an aerodrome in Northern Italy.

Home Front—No air activity over Britain either by day or night. German bomber shot down over Dover.

Greek War—Successful local operations carried out at various points on the front. Further prisoners and material captured.

THE POETS & THE WAR

XLI

AN APPRECIATION, 1940

By Richard Hawkins

We shall not speak of triumph when the tale is told
Nor lift our eyes to some immortal flame.
Our hearts are in the shelters where the long hours gave
A greater power to some quite common name.

We shall not build our arches for another year
Nor stand in silence while a poet prays.
Our monuments have corrugated sides
—and bunks,
An atmosphere of strength for all our days.

While England lives who marks a twisted cross,
And gods erupted from a pagan night,
Our little folk have taken up a load
And borne it to the edges of the light.

And He whose hands were bloody for a law
Will see a crown of laurel on her head,
The haggard, stricken nervous Mrs. Smith
Who grinned while making shelter bunk her bed.

—*The Star*

R.A.F. bombed Valona seaplane base, docks and warehouses.

THURSDAY, DEC. 19 *474th day*

In the Air—Coastal Command aircraft bombed aerodrome at Le Touquet.

Despite bad weather R.A.F. attacked targets in the Ruhr and Western Germany, including synthetic oil plants, power stations and a railway junction.

Aircraft of Coastal Command successfully bombed Bergen-Oslo railway.

War against Italy—Bardia encircled by British; two enemy divisions believed trapped.

During night of Dec. 18-19 R.A.F. heavily raided Bardia and Derna, doing great damage.

On Sudan front patrols were again active in Kassala and Gallabat areas.

Brindisi was heavily bombed during night.

Home Front—Very little hostile air activity during day. At night bombs were dropped in the Home Counties.

Enemy bomber shot down off S.W. coast.

Greek War—New positions occupied after successful engagements. More prisoners and war material captured. Very heavy fighting reported from coast north of Chimarà, where Italians were counter-attacking.

FRIDAY, DEC. 20 *475th day*

On the Sea—Admiralty announced that H.M. submarine "Truant" had sunk Italian supply ship in convoy off Cape Spartivento during night of Dec. 13-14, and large tanker off Calabrian coast on Dec. 15-16.

In the Air—R.A.F. bombed Berlin, causing many fires and explosions in target area. Attacks made on Channel invasion ports. Docks at Amsterdam also bombed. Many aerodromes raided. Gun positions near Cap Gris Nez attacked. Supply ship hit.

War against Italy—Italian rearguard at Bardia putting up strong defence. During night R.A.F. carried out highly successful raid on Castel Benito aerodrome. Nineteen enemy aircraft destroyed. Benghazi and Berka also bombed.

Home Front—Slight activity by single enemy aircraft during day. Few bombs fell in London area. At night raiders were over most parts of Britain. Merseyside had very heavy attack. Countless incendiaries dropped over Liverpool. Tannery and storage yard fired. Prolonged raid on inland N.W. town.

Greek War—Tepelini and Klisura under bombardment by Greek artillery. Farther north Greek advance maintained and fresh heights won.

SATURDAY, DEC. 21 *476th day*

In the Air—R.A.F. bombed oil plants in the Ruhr and Rhineland. Other targets included factories, inland docks, railways and aerodromes. Other forces attacked docks and harbour works at Rotterdam, Flushing, Antwerp, Ostend and Calais.

War against Italy—Enemy troops holding Bardia defences being harassed by artillery fire. British forces clearing areas to north-west and west. Nine hundred more prisoners captured.

R.A.F. bombed oil refinery at Porto Marghera, near Venice.

Home Front—Slight enemy activity during day. At night raiders again attacked Liverpool and Merseyside, and there was much damage and many casualties. Bombs also fell in widely separated places in Britain.

Three enemy aircraft destroyed.

German long-range guns shelled Dover.

Greek War—Severe battles continued in all sectors. Greeks reported to have advanced beyond Chimarà. Big battle still in progress in Tepelini-Klisura area.